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© RAY ARCHER

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DOUBLE-HARD NORTHERNER MATT MOFFATT BATTLES TO A FOURTH PLACE FINISH AT WESTON © NUNO LARANJEIRA

COMMENT

According to some fairly credible sources it was the Victorian era that was considered to be the heyday of the freak show. But having seen a plethora of off-road oddities go off over the course of one weekend in October I totally disagree.

Red Bull kicked things off with the third edition of their Straight Rhythm series and a brand-new 'Breakers' event that went off on the very same day but on the opposite side of the Atlantic.

Straight Rhythm needs very little introduction as we were all enamoured with their previous events that saw riders race side-by-side over traditional obstacles down a half-mile long, unwound supercross circuit. Pitching the cream of America's supercross athletes against each other – plus the occasional international interloper like UK Arenacross champ Thomas Ramette – the event is streamed live around the globe.

Red Bull Breakers on the other hand was a bit of a secret which is exactly what Red Bull wanted and exactly how Straight Rhythm started back in 2013. Elliott Banks-Browne's original concept of bringing motocross to a scrap yard was originally intended to be a photo shoot but somehow once the ball got rolling the concept changed – first from a photo to a video shoot before transforming into a full-on race event.

On the day 14 of the UK's fastest off-road racers (and British trials champ James Dabill who did remarkably well considering his lack of high-speed race experience) battled it out behind closed doors. The concept worked really well and everyone who was lucky enough to get an invite – whether racer, hanger-on, media freeloader or VIP – had a good old time and when everything was done and dusted the feeling was a positive one. I hope they bring it back next year as a full-on spectator event.

The very next day was the Weston Beach Race – the absolute one-off that allows total wobblers to line-up against world champions and GP winners. The RHL Activities crew perennially do a good old job with this one and it seems to attract one of the biggest crowds of the year – both off-road fans and bemused newbies who probably can't get their heads around why anyone would put themselves through such sandy torture.

Meanwhile 75 miles south-east of Weston-super-Mare lies the sleepy town of Weymouth which is also a seaside resort of sorts. Way smaller – and dare I say way classier – than Weston, Dorset's largest settlement has a beach race of its own although this is more of a motocross race than a battle of attrition.

Happening on the same weekend as the RBSR, RBB, and WBR, this event is run for the benefit of local charities and around £7,000 – taken from entry fees and donations collected on the day – is dished out afterwards. The free to watch spectacle attracts plenty of locals out for the afternoon and they happily stand shoulder to shoulder with the more knowledgeable enthusiasts who travel to the south coast to enjoy the action.

There's no denying that all four events are successful in their own right even though it's fairly difficult to comprehend just how many people get to witness them firsthand or on the internet. It's definitely a lot though and that has to be a very positive thing. So God bless the freaks, God bless them all...

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TONY CAIROLI



TONY WRAPS UP HIS YEAR WITH A RACE IN BRAZIL BUT BEFORE THAT IT'S RALLY TIME . . .

The season is finally over – it's official! After racing in Glen Helen I took some days off with my mate Tommy Searle and his girlfriend and we went to Las Vegas to celebrate my birthday and also the fact that next year we will not be in the same team. I'm a bit sad about this because we became good friends and we spent some great times together, even though it was such a difficult year for us both. Tommy is a good guy and a great rider, so I wish him all the best on his new adventure with Steve Dixon's team.

After those great days in America we went back to Europe, just in time to watch the MXoN live on TV. The race in France was something incredible for the television audience – it was motocross at its absolute best and I have never seen so many people cheering for the riders!

As you may already know, in 2016 the race will be hosted in Italy, at Maggiora, exactly 30 years after the historic event of 1986. It was one of the best MXoNs ever when Roger De Coster's US team took the win in dominant fashion. I was born but I was just one year old so I can't remember anything about the event itself but I've seen plenty of pictures and images from that day.

For the people of motocross it's a kind of milestone in the history of our sport. That day Team USA was made up of three incredible riders – David Bailey, Ricky Johnson and Jonny O'Mara who are three legends of motocross. I'm really hoping that I can be part of the Italian team because I really love to race in front of so many spectators and we, the Italians, have to prove to the French fans that we can put on the same great show they did this year.

After those days of fun and rest I'm finally back on the bike for testing and I'm gradually finding that good feeling again. You know, it's not easy to be away from the bike for such a long time and it takes time to recover the good physical conditions needed to ride fast and safe for 40 minutes.

Between testing and training sessions I was also back out in the car but not my usual one! This time I was driving a true legend of a car in a rally called, funnily enough, Rally Legend! The race is located in San Marino Republic, in the north of Italy, and is a fantastic race with many rally drivers and champions involved with their respective race cars.

There are quite a few categories in which you can compete, Historic cars, Mythic cars and modern WRC cars. I was racing in the Mythic category and I was driving a Lancia Delta Integrale EVO2 – a true legend of a car that made rally history during the 1990s winning many world titles. I was only able to test the car the day before the race and I spent most of the limited amount of time simply trying to understand how to drive it!

The first day we were racing in the dark, at night, which was quite tricky and not helped because the roads were slippery and dirty. At the end of day one I was fifth after the first four stages and reasonably happy. The second day I was feeling more comfortable even with the really poor weather conditions. One stage was cancelled due to the heavy rain and that made everything more difficult but I did manage to close out the day in front. The last day I really pumped for the victory and I pushed hard, winning three of the four stages and grabbing

my first rally victory, beating drivers such as Juha Kankkunen and Miki Biasion who are both former rally world champions. I have to say that it was really fun and I can't wait for the next one in November in Monza – the Monza Monster Rally Show, where I will again face Valentino Rossi and many more drivers.

Back from the rally we have been testing loads of new parts for the 2016 bike and I want to keep growing my confidence and my speed after such a long break. We headed out to Brazil, in order to do the last race of the Copa Brazil – their national championship. That one was a good test and as usual I got to meet so many fans over there it's amazing and difficult to describe. The Brazilians are crazy and so warm that I feel like home when I go there and I hope that we will get to race a round of the world championship there again soon.

Anyways as much as I like to chat I'm afraid I have to go! I'm in San Paolo airport and my flight for Rome is waiting for me here and I can't afford to miss it because I get to go to my home town of Patti, to meet my friends, my family and to party with them as we do every year.

A presto amici (see you soon friends)!

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IRN BRY ENDS OUT THE SEASON THEN PICKS UP HIS FIRST INJURY OF THE YEAR . . .

If Carlsberg did Octobers...they couldn't make it anything like the one I've just had! What a kick-ass time – it's been off the chart! Let me give you a little recap... It started with the last round of the Maxxis British champs at FatCat and prior to that weekend I had two solid days of sand riding with my bro and frikkin' loved it. I had such a good couple of days that I might go as far as saying they were some of the most enjoyable days I've rode this year – definitely in the sand anyway.

Going to FatCat the pressure was off as I couldn't do anything in terms of the championship – I couldn't really go forward or back. I had already signed a new deal for 2016 with Apico Husqvarna UK and I was booked to go to Ibiza the following day for my stag do. So I was chilled and just went to ride my bike – literally no expectations other than that. But, sh*t, it went good. Well, it maybe never went 'good' but I was happy with it all the same.

I pulled a decent start in the first race, worked some magic in the first three turns and by the second lap was battling for the lead. The new MX2 champ Lenoir and I went hard at it for just under 20 minutes, duking it out for the lead which I managed to lock down with a few to go until about eight seconds before the last lap when Petar Petrov came from nowhere and mugged me to take the win, just.

I was pissed but pleased I was finally showing again what I have in the tank as I feel I've underachieved a lot this year. Anyway, it wasn't a great day after that – my bike nipped up early in race two while again in second place and for the third race I had to hop on my spare bike which unfortunately wasn't packing as much heat as I needed to do a good job and I battled back from a rank start to 10th.

But I was still pumped on life! I showed well in races one and two, I again finished in the top-five of the championship for the fifth year in a row and in 20 hours I was going on holiday. Stag do, Ibiza, 14 of my bestest pals, four days, excited...

Early Monday afternoon and we were on the gas. The minute we all got together at the airport the tempo was set and from there on there was only a time or two that we each had to take our foot off the gas a little to recompose for another push.

As you can imagine the trip was jam-packed with quality material to write about but I just don't think I could do it justice. However, there's one story I will tell you because it's hung around long after EasyJet flight EZ447 landed and, no, no-one has got herpes. It happened on night two by which point I don't think we had even been there 24 hours and we were out in one of Sant Antonio's bars.

Loaded with vodka Cokes and cocktail pitchers, someone fired up the punch machine in the middle of the bar. In what really was a c*ck measuring competition the team were taking turns to see who could record the highest score. I wasn't getting involved because I hurt myself the last time I did it so I took the mature option.

It was one for two attempts and I was stood with my back to the machine just off the edge of the dancefloor. At some point during the competition someone swung their first punch only to come in disappointingly low and turned around and walked away, likely fighting for his dignity and trying to convince everyone that he does in fact have a large frank in his pants.

I shouted to him over my shoulder that he should have another go but he obviously didn't hear me and so right around that point I made a decision I would regret...

I was so bleary-eyed I couldn't even tell if my brother was my dad or my dad was my brother but I swung in a huge haymaker from the edge of the dancefloor without even bothering to face the machine – instead letting the momentum of my loose right arm spin me – and...missed! Well, that's not entirely true because in fact I did catch it – just enough to rip my thumb back to my wrist. Someone handed me a vodka Coke and my immediate reaction was to sink my

thumb right in.

I stood around for the rest of the night with my thumb in a vodka Coke 'icing' it and had to nurse it a little for the rest of the holiday but in the grand scheme of things a wee sore thumb was a small price to pay for the privilege of an outstanding week.

Once I was home it was a case of gearing up to get hitched to my good lady of many years, Ashley. But my thumb was still giving me serious sh*t and so Ash dragged me to the local A&E exactly one week before the wedding and – dun, dun, duuuuuu – low and behold I was diagnosed with a bitching thumb fracture and completely ruptured ligament so I was booked in for emergency 'hand trauma' surgery.

So on the Tuesday – four days before my wedding – I was under the knife getting the muscle tacked out the way, the ligament rejoined and the bone screwed back together – priceless. Yep, after getting through a whole season relatively unscathed I still got married with a cast on. And she laughed it off. I knew she was a keeper.

And now? Now I'm on my honeymoon on a boat cruising South East Asia for the next two weeks. I've been to Singapore already and will stop at Koh Samui, Bangkok, Vietnam, Cambodia and then a couple of days in Hong Kong. Still with this bloody cast on.

As I keep telling her though, it all just makes for a great story.



Please make no attempt to imitate the illustrated riding scenes, always wear protective clothing and observe the applicable provisions of the road traffic regulations!
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IT'S TIME TO TAKE IT INDOORS...

No sooner has this year's world champions been crowned than the nights have started drawing in and attentions turned to arenas full of rocks, logs and a healthy dose of carnage...

Indoor Enduro, or SuperEnduro as the FIM's winter series is now named, has come a long way over the last decade or so. For a start it's a now a proper championship – some five, six or seven rounds of it. And it attracts riders from further a field than the Enduro World Championship series does, too. But it wasn't always that way.

Looking back with rose tinted glasses on is always a little risky. Everything was better, less commercialised, back in the day. Wasn't it? Indoor Enduro was little more than a Spanish experiment – a one-off race held each year in Barcelona. There was no 'official' factory team support of the event, not an energy drink manufacturer's logo in site. It was just end of season fun. And beers afterwards. Lots of beers.

Seemingly everything was simple back then. Starting with the tracks. They weren't easy – anyone who tells you riding any kind of motorcycle indoors is having a laugh – but they were uncomplicated. They offered up great racing. The vibe of the whole event was one of 'it's just a bit of fun'. Some took it more seriously than others, but most simply wanted to have a go.

As indoor enduro's popularity increased something not that great happened. Organisers started to try and out do one another. Simple track layouts with some tricky spots became hard. Seriously hard. One year in Genoa, Italy the track was so demanding that only a handful of riders were able to complete a lap without smashing either themselves or their bikes into the ground on multiple occasions.

Thankfully, things have been tamed down a little. But seemingly only in the States have they figured out that filling each and every straight with a brutally tough rock garden or radiator high logs isn't the way to go. What started out as outdoor enduro racing done indoor has gotten progressively more extreme.

For the FIM SuperEnduro series to really deliver the edge-of-your seat racing it can do it needs someone who truly understands how tracks should be. Someone like Paul Edmundson, who happens to be the new FIM SuperEnduro track inspector. Paul knows his sh*t. But the question is, will he have the power to ensure tracks are the way they need to be?

The problem Paul will face is that by the time he arrives on site at each event the tracks will already be built. And the people who'll have built them won't want to know that alterations might be needed.

One event where that certainly shouldn't be

a problem is Paul's own indoor race. Bringing the three biggest names in the indoor business together on British soil, Eddy's indoor will see Knighter, Jonny Walker and Taddy Blazusiak going at it as they 'warm up' for the upcoming SuperEnduro world champs.

From the pressure of being a world championship competition always used to ensure close, entertaining racing back in the day. So by mixing together what should be a great track with three stand out indoor performers, well, it might just serve up some old-school fun-filled bar-bangin' indoor action.

Here's hoping...

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DANIEL GROVE



Photo by Mike Wood

WHY DANIEL LIKES TO BE BESIDE THE SEASIDE . . .

I packed up my bucket and spade and headed south a few weeks back to take in the Weymouth Beach Race from a spectator's point of view.

I planned on signing up for it a little while ago but a decent run of championship results saw me end up ninth and as this beach race fell six days before the final round I didn't want to take any chances as bottomless sand isn't your motor's favourite going, that's for sure. I'd have had my bike prepped up properly for it but it would have been a lot of work getting it beach-ready and then motocross-ready again with not a lot of turnaround time.

Anyway, I don't own a bucket and spade but I was armed with a box of custom-made cakes – made by my Bella – for a long-time friend/Yamaha knowledge bank/engine guy who goes by the name of Andy Sutton of Poole Motorcycles to give away on his stand. I certainly drew some attention to myself walking along the seafront as the box they were in was clear. I was The Pied Piper of Weymouth if you will. The cakes themselves lasted about as long as a lean-jetted 125 would around the Weymouth track.

The track itself is obviously made for the one day of racing with just under half of it being a wide-open straight and the rest a motocross style track – although it looked a little tight and twisty and the dunes were so steep that I don't even know how I'd have ridden them if I was first out.

There are two things that stood out for me about this event that may not be that well known, the first one being that it is run by the AMCA and the local Purbeck motocross club – in conjunction with the local Lions club – which are both behind the organisational side of things.

The Lions receive a cheque for £1500 – raised from rider entry fees – at the winners' presentation on the Sunday. From programme and t-shirt sales across the weekend Alf Stearn – the main man behind the event and chairman of the Purbeck club – told me that they usually raise in the region of £5000 for the Weymouth & Portland Lions Club which is then distributed to local charities.

The second point is that the Weymouth and Portland Borough Council is also well behind this event as it gives the local economy a little throttle twist heading into the winter months. Councils don't usually get involved in any type of motorsport, not that I'm aware of anyway, so if you can get a council on your side for anything make sure you keep them sweet!

Alf told me that a few years ago a cashpoint in the town had £10,000 put into it on the Saturday morning before the beach race and by the Sunday morning it was empty! And no, it wasn't robbed so you can see why other seaside towns have started running beach races over the winter in recent years and they're pretty popular – I can see even more popping up as we seem to have had a few new venues in recent years.

The Weymouth Beach Race hasn't become commercialised like other beach races which I think is great and so it doesn't have to draw in huge crowd numbers to line pockets and survive. Obviously less money will be raised if poor weather leads to less spectators but the event certainly has a secure future with the partners that it has on board and long may it continue.

More food references coming now – which I always seem to squeeze in one way or another on this page – and it made a nice change from the generic MX burger van to sample all the

fresh food that was for sale. Of course, there was a burger van there but the seawall was packed with guys and gals selling a whole host of locally produced food and as the whole town was open for business you could take the family along and leave them to it while you took in the racing and caught up with some old riding buddies like I did.

Better still, if you raced it you could incorporate a weekend away and it would be a lot easier to convince your significant other to come along too – as well as your kids if you own any – as there's no sign of knee-deep mud. It's not a long day stuck in a field either as the simple two-moto format for the Junior, Senior and Expert classes makes for a short day of racing. Starting with practice at midday, it's all wrapped up by about 4pm. The final bonus is that it's free to watch!

All the usual seaside attractions are open throughout the weekend and Saturday now has a packed programme of events – on and off the beach.

The Weymouth Beach Race reminded me of the Le Touquet beach race I attended back in February this year, only on a much smaller scale and much warmer! Of course, at Weymouth you couldn't sit inside your accommodation or a local bar and watch the race live on Motors TV – maybe something to add next year, Alf?

Daniel Grove

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THE REVERED REFLECTS ON THE YEAR GONE BY AND WHAT THE FUTURE MAY HOLD . . .

J'day folks, bloody miserable ol' day here in Ipswich – winter's coming fast and I'm sat in my lounge next to the fire with my dogs, recovering from four days in Amsterdam for my stag do.

I haven't ridden a motorcycle since FatCat. My back was a little sore after the race there so I've decided to stay off the bike until my body is 100 per cent.

As I said before, my plan is to start a strict physical training schedule the first week of November. I'm going to lose some weight in time for Christmas and would like to be around 78 to 80kg. That might sound heavy to some of you but even when I was a skinny 250 rider I was around 76kg.

I worked a lot on strength last year after some of my injuries but through it all I learned one thing – strength is useless without flexibility and being fluid, co-ordinated and relaxed – so to me the strength thing is the last of all of those. But all that comes second to having a strong enough heart which is why we have to do so much cardio stuff at a steady level.

I secretly look forward to it. It's cool going for a long cycle with your mates, although not when it's pouring down or freezing. But the satisfaction when you get home afterwards is something else and that alone is one good way to build confidence, knowing you've been through those hard times.

FatCat was a bit of a crappy day to be honest. The mix of it being quite a fast lay-out and a sandy track but with some harder bits where traction was low meant that me and my bike were not getting along at all.

We got the suspension pretty good by race two but I had to ride the absolute wheels of the thing to keep up with the 450s around there. That meant a lot of wheelspin where I was revving it a bit harder which then meant the bike was moving quite a lot and I was never ever comfortable.

It all wasn't helped by the fact that I hadn't raced in months and the arm-pump I encountered in qualifying and the first race was so great that three days after the event I could still feel where my skin had been stretched by the muscle expanding so greatly.

By the second race I had to move my levers up a couple of mil just to be able to reach them as my wrists were so stiff. For the third race I had started to feel the flow a little bit but still had to ride out of my comfort zone to keep up which wasn't fun at all. Then at one point before a jump the bike skipped left and then right so hard I jumped off the track. I was shocked at what had happened as it stepped out so quickly and I was also annoyed to be honest.

And right there was where my nightmare race season ended – and it was also my last ride with the Steve Turner racing team. Thanks to Steve and Matt Winterbourne for all their work in the last two years. The first few months with them in 2014 was tough but we pulled through with some good races – a sixth in Spain was the stand-out – and we were working hard to get out of the start but then I got injured and that's how it's gone ever since.

It upsets me so much when I think back on the last 12 or so months, it hurts me inside as I know I will never get that time back and the opportunity with those guys has come to an end. I've had some tough, quite complicated injuries and I've gone through the darkest times in my life.

Those who know me know how much heart I put into my racing and how I'm a totally different person when I'm not on the race track. I've hid a lot through this period but I'm very lucky to have my fiancée Blu to listen to me and keep positive about everything.

It's not all negative and we've had the opportunity to move into our first property together which was one of the proudest moments of my life. And as I've already

mentioned, I've just been on a stag do with 16 of the best friends I could ask for and in a couple of months Blu and I will get married so I've got a lot to be happy about.

But I'm a racer at heart and even when I signed up to spend every penny I've ever earned on a property I genuinely couldn't have given a toss – I wasn't even excited, I just wanted to be racing and succeeding at the sport I have lived around forever. It was only when we moved in and sat on our sofa that I thought 'yes, I can be proud, I've earned this through my racing, through the hard work, the good and the bad times'.

And there will be more! I spoke to Mr Townley earlier, planning my trip to his place in New Zealand this winter. It looks like I will be heading there straight after Christmas for a minimum of a month – the NZ nationals are in February so it would be nice to race them as well as the level there is very high with the local Kiwis joined by all the Aussie factory riders who go over there pre-season.

It all depends on when I sign with my new team and what they want to do in regards to pre-season etc. I should be able to reveal something soon hopefully.

Thanks for reading guys and thank you for the support. Once I'm sorted for next year I have a clothing line with a local guy to sell online. I do get asked a fair bit which is cool and it's made me want to get some stuff out there.



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While Ashley's dress is lovely, Bry's dress is even lovelier!



Max Anstie lost out on taking British title #1 thanks to a low flying Austrian

AN UNBELIEVABLY AWESOME SELECTION OF OFF-ROAD NEWS AND GOSSIP . . .

We can't kick off this month's Newsound without first saying a mahoosive congratulations to our regular doggy dirt disher Bryan MacKenzie and his beautiful new wife Ashley.

Despite injuring himself during his stag-do shenanigans, Irn Bry managed to get to the kirk on time rocking a traditional Scottish checked skirt and – we're guessing – little in the way of under-garments.

Our favourite skinny Scot and his blushing bride are currently honeymooning in Singapore – as opposed to heinie-mooning in Edinburgh which is what would have happened if the wind had got under his kilt (taxi!).

Good work you two – lots of love from your DBR family!

In other wedding news, Jake Nicholls is due to get hitched to his much, much better half Blu in the very near future. The Reverend managed to negotiate his stag-do without getting injured which is a feat in itself and it sorta goes without saying – but we'll say it anyway – that we wish them nothing but holeshots and happiness in the future.

Nuptial news out of the way, let's move

swiftly on to the World Cup of Motocross – aka the MXoN.

The three-man British team of Shaun Simpson, Dean Wilson and Max Anstie went into Ernee with our best chance of a podium finish and possibly even a win for years. Guttingly (if winningest is a word then I'm claiming 'guttingly'), it went tits-up on the Saturday when Anstie was confused with a downslope by Pascal Rauchenecker. To be fair it wasn't really the Austrian's fault but the impact left Maximus with a broken neck, back and shoulder.

Home favourites France went on to win from America and Belgium – you can find the feature a bit further into this month's mag – and Max is, amazingly, already back on his feet and contemplating winning next year's world MX2 title for, if you believe the rumours, Jacky Martens' factory Husqvarna team.

Okay, now it's time to sniff out a bit of transfer news...

The first morsel of news to break was that Clement Desalle has moved to the Monster Energy KRT team. Pretty much every man and his dog has known for a couple of months that the MX Panda was jumping off the factory Suzi

but because of contractual obligations it wasn't official announced until recently.

Let's hope the change of scene encourages the grumpy Belgian to turn his frown upside down, eh...

On the other side of the pond Eli Tomac – quite possibly the most exciting rider on the planet – has also gone green with the Monster Energy Kawasaki team. Tomac, who's been out-of-action since busting up both shoulders trying to make it six-from-six at Thunder Valley in June, will have to work his butt off to be race-ready for Anaheim 1 in the New Year but this Newsound has faith in him.

Much nearer to home, Brad Anderson has hooked up with Verde Sports Racing to campaign a fo-fiddy Toomer in the 2016 Maxxis and other selected British races and a GL12 275cc two-smoke Yamaha in the EMX300 series.

Amazingly, Ando will be old enough to qualify for the British Vets class next summer but he's showing no signs of slowing down and is still a podium threat in the Maxxis and a potential Euro champ after sweeping the last four motos of the season in Czech and Belgium.

Double British MX1 champion Shaun



James Stewart's first race in over a year resulted in James Stewart's first win in over a year...



GRIMBO'S TURKISH DELIGHT!

GRAEME JARVIS WINS THE RED BULL SEA TO SKY STOPPING JONNY WALKER'S PERFECT SEASON

Graham Jarvis took victory at the final round of the Hard Enduro season with a win at the Red Bull Sea to Sky in Turkey. Entering Turkey, talk centred around Jonny Walker chasing a perfect season of wins but Jarvis had other ideas and was determined to become the spoiler in the mix.

As defending champion of the race, Jarvis proved again that he's the master of the mountain by reaching the summit of the 2365m high Olympos Mountain first.

Walker took the lead as they left the Kemer shoreline and opened up a slight lead but was never able to properly break away. Jarvis – despite fluffing the start – fought his way from 10th up to third before closing in on Walker.

His gamble to skip the final pit stop paid off and he took the lead before the final mountain stretch to secure his fourth Sea to Sky win in five years. Walker finished two minutes adrift in second with Wade Young completing the top three.



JUST CHAMPION!

JAMIE MCCANNEY CLAIMS WORLD TITLE

Jamie McCanney is the 2015 Enduro Junior World Champion. The Husqvarna rider secured the title his brother Danny won in 2014 at the final round of the series in France.

Having led the class since the opening round on Chile, McCanney didn't fail to disappoint in France. Entering Requista with a healthy points lead, McCanney rode very much with the title in mind to secure the championship with a day to spare.

Simpson is also on the move and will spend the next two years under Steve Turner's Wilvo Forkrent KTM awning with factory support direct from Austria. The Scot has proved himself to be a world championship contender in 2016 and with some extra Mattighofen magic behind him could well improve on this year's #4 MXGP ranking.

While we're on the subject of Woody (as we like to call him in the Newshound kennel), he completed a momentous clean sweep of the – deep breath – Maxxis ACU British Motocross Championship powered by Skye Energy Drink – now exhale – MX1 class at the series finale at FatCat at the beginning of October.

Winning all eight overalls and dropping just three races was a fantastic performance, especially when you consider the class of rider he was up against all year.

With Anstie injured the chances of his 44-point lead in the Maxxis MX2 class surviving FatCat looked on a par with those of a one legged man in an arse-kicking contest and, sure enough, Dyer & Butler KTM's Steven Lenoir did enough on the day to take the title.

Max was desperately unlucky – he sat out the first round through injury as well – but you

can't take anything away from the Frenchman. In his time in England he has been consistently fast and totally professional and, after narrowly missing out on a number of titles, fully deserves the 2016 crown.

Just one week later the 33rd RHL Weston Beach Race saw Simpson and David Knight start favourites for top honours on the Somerset sands with Simpson, the defending champion, just edging it on current form. The question on everyone's lips was Woody or wouldn't he?

Well he wouldn't – and neither would Knighter – after both riders' KTMs developed misfires on the opening lap. Instead it was brothers Nathan and Ben Watson who completed a famous family one-two after three hours of action. When their dad Rob Meek, himself a multi-time Weston winner, was told his lad had won he replied "what son?" – true story!

Time for some more Stateside shizzle now and after his victorious comeback at the Red Bull Straight Rhythm, James Stewart obviously needs to brush up on his turning technique.

Bubba went down in a left-hander in the opening points-payer of the Monster Energy Cup in Vegas, re-aggravating a wrist injury that caused him to pull out.

>>

FACTORY FLYER!

STEVE HOLCOMBE SIGNS FACTORY DEAL FOR 2016...

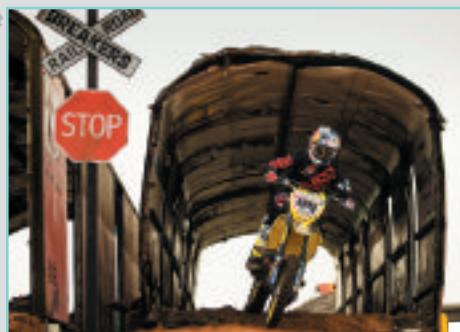


Steve Holcombe has signed a deal to race as a Beta Factory rider for 2016. Easily one of the standout performers of the EWC this year, Holcombe was hot property on the rider's market as the enduro season drew to a close at the final round in France.

Confirming his future, Steve will step up to a role as a factory rider while also moving up to the Enduro 3 category. Third overall in the Junior class and with six wins to his tally despite missing the series opener in Chile, Holcombe is sure to become a rider to watch next year.

JUNKYARD DOGS!

ELLIOTT BANKS-BROWNE WINS RED BULL BREAKERS...



There was absolutely no stopping Elliott Banks-Browne as he romped home to victory in the inaugural Red Bull Breakers event that he originally envisaged before making it a reality with help from his friends at Red Bull.

The Geartec Suzuki star stomped on all-comers, edging out James Dunn, Adam Sterry and Ben Watson in the qualifying rounds before meeting LPE Kawasaki's Jamie Law in the final. Law meanwhile knocked out Jordan Booker, Alfie Smith and Jack Brunell on his way to the main setting up a scorching two-lapper that would decide who would be crowned champion.

As the gated dropped EBB took an initial lead but Law just would not give up and tenaciously chased Banks-Browne to the finish. Unfortunately, the Cumbrian just came short in his challenge and crossed the line around half a second behind Elliott.



Say bonjour to our new British MX2 champion – Frenchman Steven Lenoir

No-one managed to take home the million greenbacks for three wins but Ken Roczen's 1-4-1 still earned him \$100,000 – that's a pretty big donkey-choker for a night's work. Ryan 'The Diesel' Dungey was second from Jason Anderson who was left counting the cost – possibly \$100K – of a five-place penalty for missing the obligatory Joker Lane in the opening race.

Race fans will get a rare chance to see Stewart in action in Europe next month when he heads the line-up at the Lille Supercross on November 14-15. Bubba's baby bro Lil' Malc's also signed up to race along with other big names including Weston Peick, Cooper Webb, world champ Romain Febvre and our very own Shaun Simpson.

Fancy watching that lot bangin' bars? Does a Newshound poop in the woods...

Speaking of woods it's been another cracker of a year for British enduro. We're doing bloody great on the international scene. A world title,

multiple race wins, ISDE success and continued extreme enduro domination. Yes, the good times were rolling in 2015.

Delivering another British world crown, Jamie McCannay was crowned the 2015 Enduro Junior World Champion at the final round of the season in France. On behalf of everyone at the DBR towers, here's a massive congratulations to you Jamie. Awesome job.

Having slotted himself at the top of the standings at round one back in April, Jamie always looked like the champion elect. Claiming six wins and only once dropping outside of the top three allowed him to secure the crown his brother Danny won in 2014 a day early.

Joining Jamie on the podium in France, Steve Holcombe capped off a terrific debut EWC season with a double win in France for third overall. Placing just seven points off runner-up Giacomo Redondi, it would most certainly have been a British 1-2 if Holcombe hadn't missed round one. All that's left now is for the duo to



Nathan Watson wins the Weston Beach Race



fight it out for the honour of British Enduro Champion next month at the Muntjac.

France was a bittersweet ending for Danny McCanney in Enduro 1. The Manxman held third overall for most of the year but a knee injury at round of five of seven really hampered him. Unable to give his best he eventually tied on points with Lorenzo Santolino but slipped to fourth on the tiebreaker due to Lorenzo's win in Italy despite McCanney scoring more podium results.

Getting his first EWC season under his belt, Jack Edmondson is another name on the rise. Third overall in the 125 Youth Cup, Jack will be working overtime to step things up for 2016 with the top two Mikael Persson and Josep Garcia moving on to the Juniors. Finally, Jane Daniel delivered another cracker of a year in the Women's Cup. Runner-up to Laia Sanz, Daniels also won the final day of the year too.

October was a crazy month for Antoine Meo. Clocking up both air miles and race miles, Meo

won his fifth EWC crown, raced two rallies and then clinched the Italian Enduro Championship.

Winning the Enduro 2 title in France – KTM's first with the 350EXC-F, Meo then hopped on a plane for Morocco and raced both the Rally of Morocco and Merzouga Rally. After a best stage result of sixth in Morocco, a stage win at the Merzouga Rally and a few thousand race miles, Meo arrived to the Italian champs in the nick of time to claim that title too.

Across the water and Cody Webb is in the driving seat of the AMA EnduroCross Championship. With two rounds left in the series, Webb has pulled out an 11-point lead following his victory at Everett in Washington. Haaker is second overall but will need to cut down his mistakes to reign Webb back in.

Also in America Welshman Jason Thomas made the 2015 GNCC Racing series one to remember by winning the XC2 Pro Lites title.

Consistently the rider to beat in the class, Thomas has been charging since the series

began way back in March. Wrapping the title up at the third last round with second, Thomas secured his second XC2 crown since moving Stateside.

"It's been a long year, and we've done a lot of hard work behind the scenes. Everyone has been a big part of this, it wasn't just me," said Thomas. "My dad was able to make it this weekend, and it's a big deal because he isn't here every round like majority of the other guys' dads. It really meant a lot to me that he could be here."

Jason will move up to the XC1 Pro class for 2016.

Finally don't forget, top-notch endurocross action will be on our doorstep in a couple of week's time. November 1 at the Stafford County Showground will be the scene for the Enduro Extreme Indoor. Taddy Blazusiak is set to take on Jonny Walker and David Knight. Don't miss the action...



I.T. FOR DUMMIES

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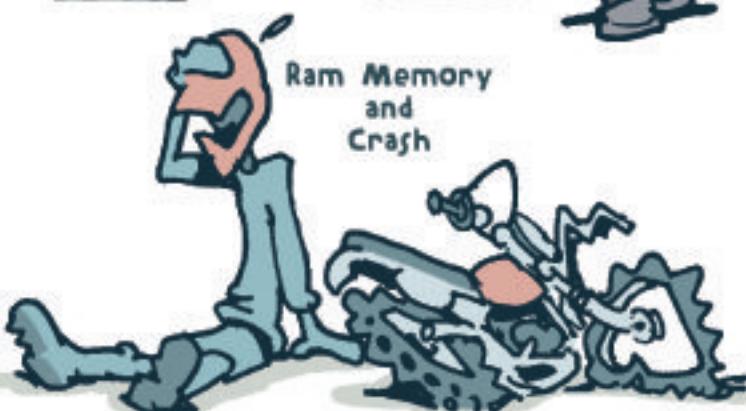
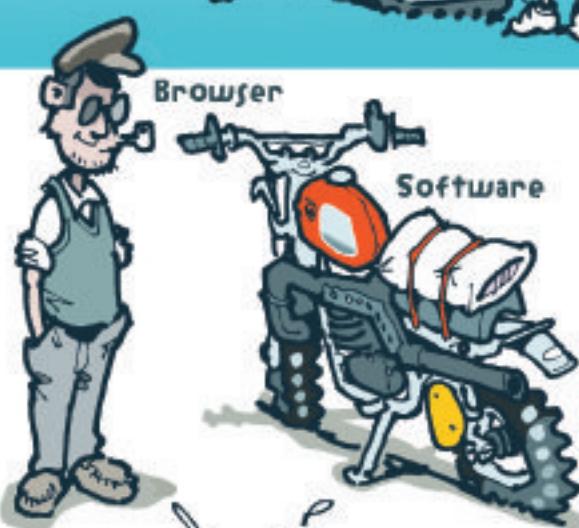
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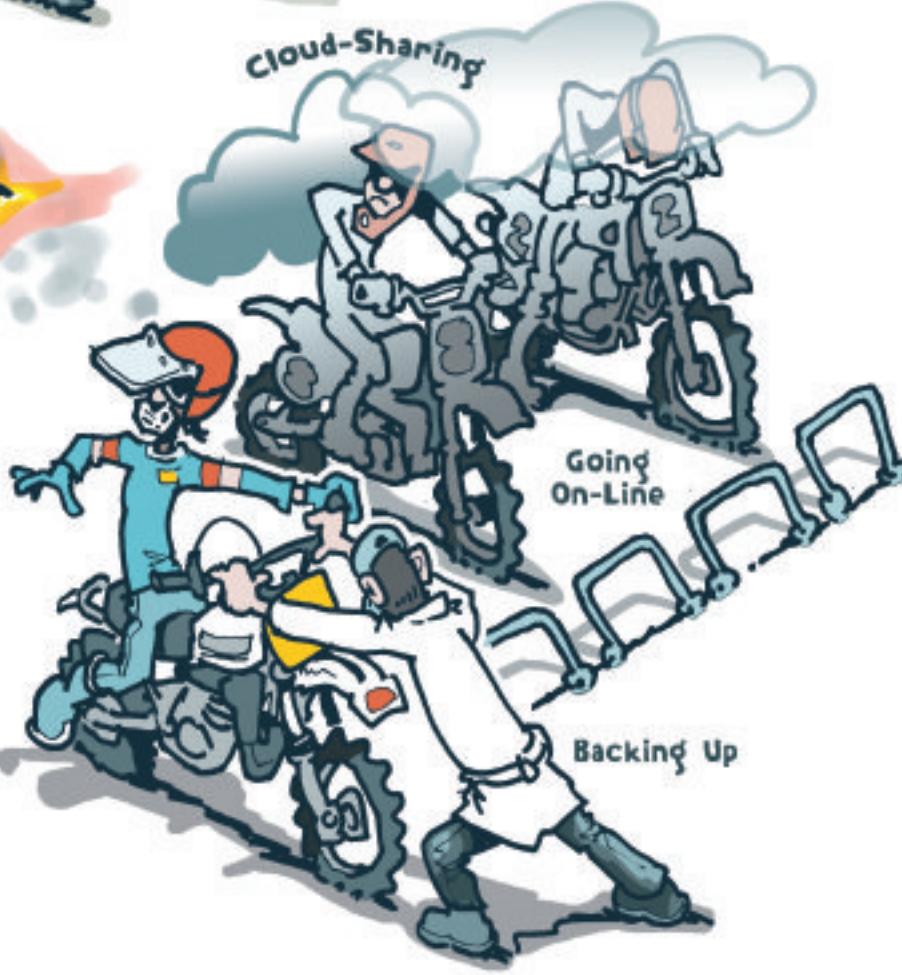
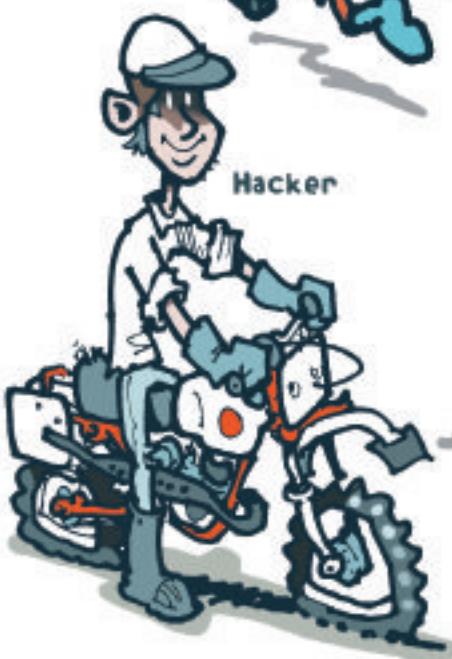


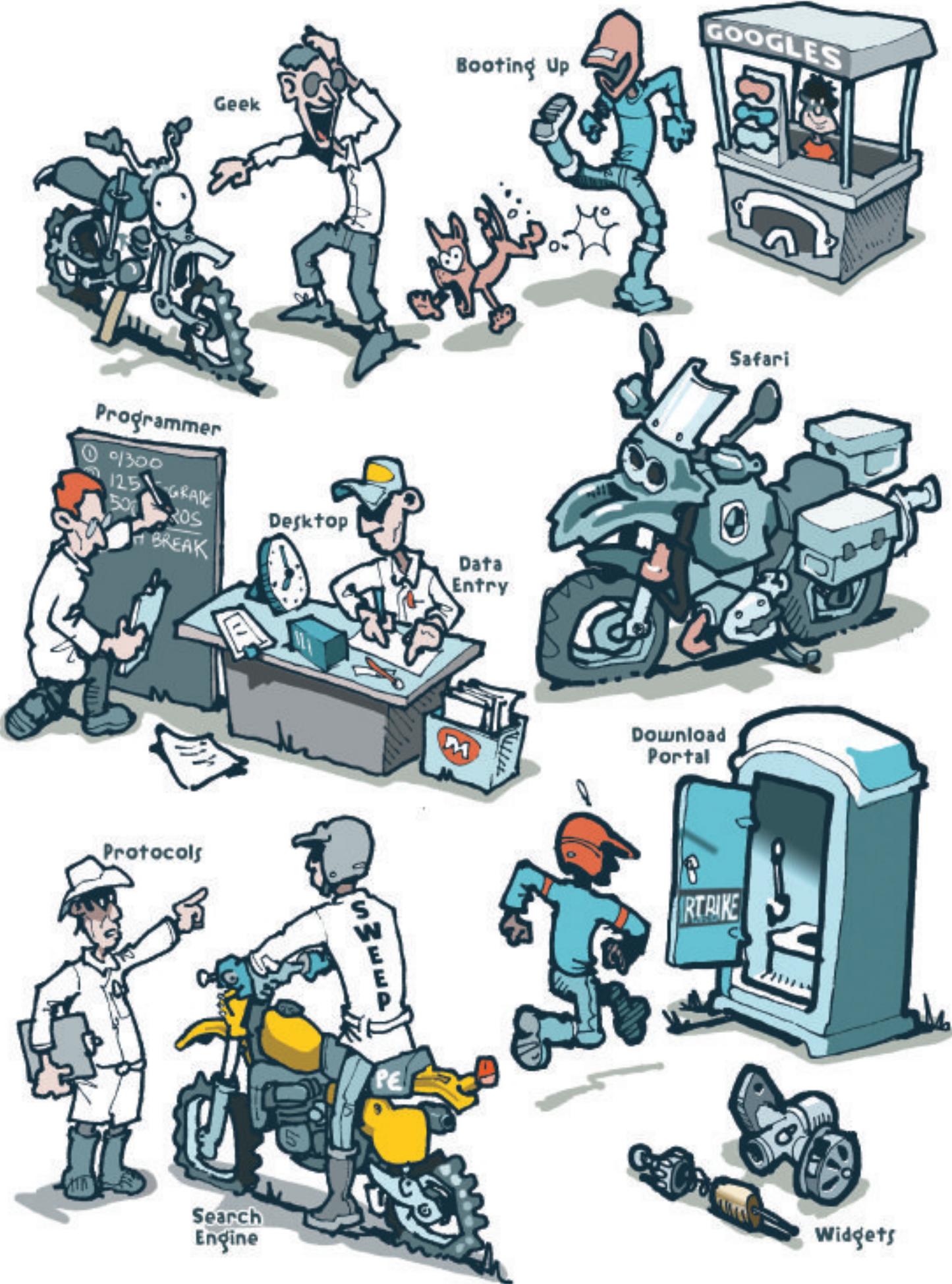
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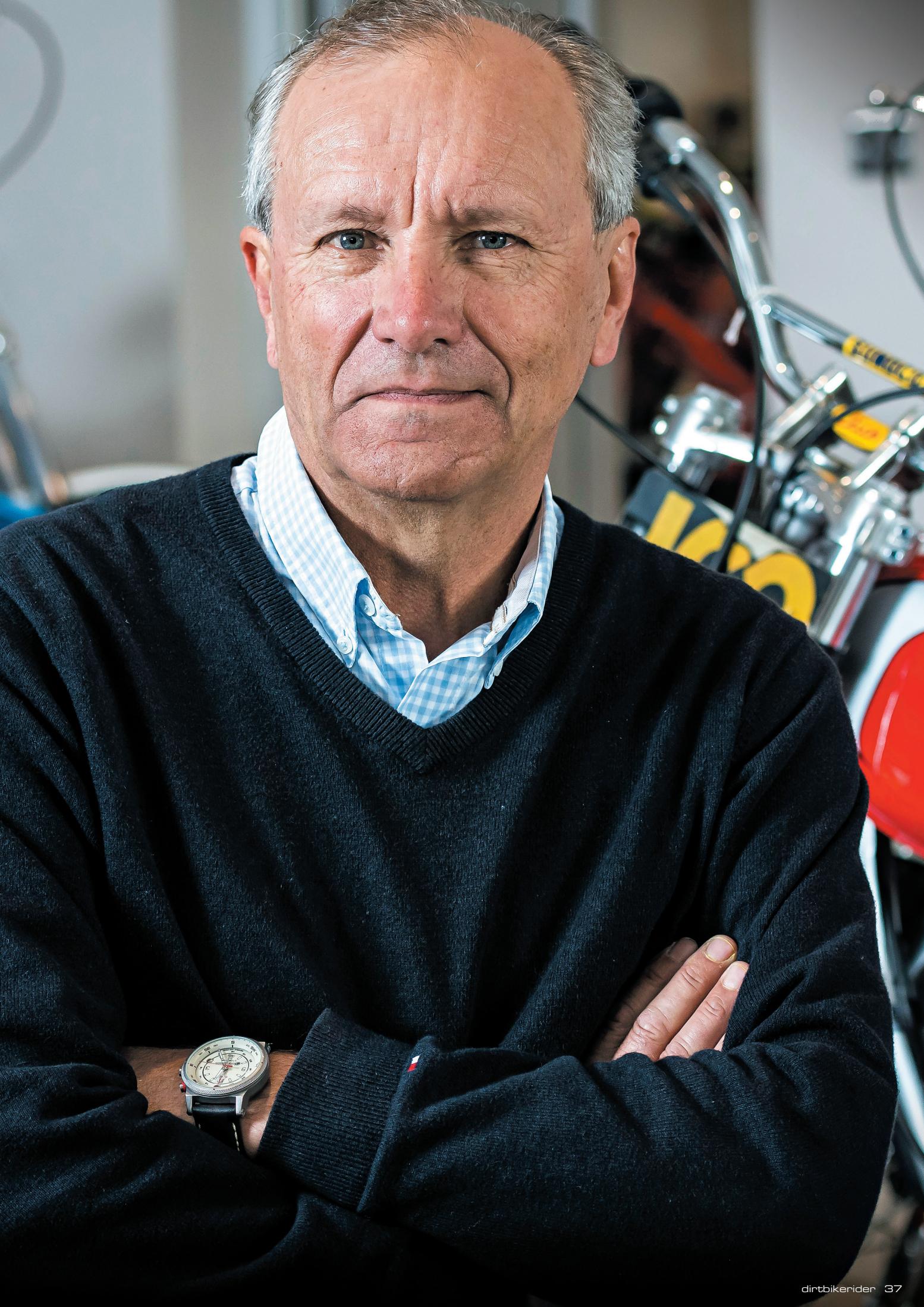


Vintage ICON!

The title 'Vintage ICON!' is written in a large, black, cursive font. Above the word 'Vintage', there are three small, dark stars. Below the word 'ICON', there are three more small, dark stars. The background is a textured, light-colored surface with some faint, illegible text visible in the upper right corner.

WITH HIS THREE CONSECUTIVE WORLD TITLES,
YRJO VESTERINEN WAS THE TRIALS SUPERSTAR OF
THE 1970S WHO WENT ON TO ESTABLISH THE APICO
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Three framed Federation Internationale de Motocyclisme world championship certificates side by side on a wall isn't a common sight. In May I was fortunate to see Dave Thorpe's hanging in his Devon home and last month I saw Yrjo Vesterinen's trio of FIM accolades. Seeing both was a privilege.

Of course, DT's three world titles make him a British motocross hero but Yrjo's, well, his trials world championships – won a decade earlier – made him the bogeyman, at least it did to me. Not fair and no longer true but when you're a TY80-mounted eight-year-old watching the sub-zero Finn with ice water in his veins beating Martin Lampkin and Malcolm Rathmell it's easy to be biased.

If you don't follow trials the chances are you'll still have heard of Yrjo but you'll know him as Vesty who, along with his wife Diane, founded the Apico empire. Vesty sold the business in 2014 and now spends a large part of his time restoring historical trials machines to concours condition – but we'll come back to that later.

With his 63rd birthday coming up in December, Vesty's spent almost half-a-century involved in trials so it's little wonder that the sport has been a massive influence.

"I suppose trials led very much to my present life," he says. "I found my wife through trials, most of my friends, where I live now. Everything was shaped by trials in one way or another."

Vesty won his first world title in 1976 but it would have come a year earlier if the rules had been the same as they are now and instead it was big Mart who claimed the inaugural world title (up to then it was classed as a European championship).

"I finished second to Martin. I think I lost by one or two points but I had more gross points than Martin or Malcolm but in those days the rules were different and not all the rounds counted for the championship. We probably dropped around four rounds or something and that was my downfall.

"I'd won more rounds than Martin or Malcolm but I had a couple of fourth places that basically sealed my fate. If I'd been third instead of fourth once I would have won the championship but

in the early part of the year I didn't quite realise I could win the championship – that came after the Canadian round in the summer where I won and I realised I could win but it was a bit too late.

"Then I went from Canada and the next round was in America and I came second there and the next round from memory was Finland or Sweden – I know I won Finland and I think I came second in Sweden. Then I won in Switzerland and I won in Germany and the last round was in the Czech Republic and Mick Andrews won that."

For the next three years Vesty strung together a hat-trick of world titles but he's quick to point out that it wasn't a Toni Bou-style demolition of the opposition.

"I didn't dominate. I managed to win the championship but nobody dominated in those days. It wasn't like nowadays – I suppose the proper domination started with Jordi Tarres, then it continued with Dougie Lampkin and now with Toni Bou. Now it looks like when someone is winning a championship they have no genuine opposition but in those days when ►>





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was riding the competition was very, very intense.

"You have to bear in mind that also in those days we had to cover lots of different types of terrain – there was mud and tree roots and streams, dry going, very grippy going, all sorts of different things – whereas nowadays it looks like most of the rounds the sections are somewhat like the indoor sections are taken outdoors with massive steps and riding on the back wheel everywhere.

"It obviously requires a lot of skill but they don't have rounds like, say, the Hurst Cup in Belfast that was a mud bath. I'd love to see how a lot of today's riders would handle that sort of going."

Thanks to his natural talent, dedication and a determination to improve, Vesty's rise to the top was a rapid one. Amazingly, he only started on two wheels a decade before that first world championship season.

"I started riding a moped when I was about 13-and-a-half or thereabouts and then I rode my first competition that summer. It was a series of moped trials near Helsinki. It was a very minority sport – in fairness I don't think many people had heard of motorcycle trials, it was a sport very much on the fringes.

"In 1969 I rode a junior class but in Finland it was for one year only. You'd get the motorcycle driving licence at 16 so I got my licence in December '68 although I rode my first trial before I had a driving licence because there were a number of events that were not on the road. Once I had my licence I started competing and I rode every event that I possibly could. I entered every event in Finland and some in Sweden.

"In 1970 when I had done my apprenticeship in the schoolboys I moved to the main class in Finland."

The same year Vesty entered the Belgian round of the European championship and his talent was noticed immediately.

"I remember being very proud when I got a mention in *Motorcycle News* or *Motorcycling* – I don't remember which – because I was the only one who got up a section by a stream. Sammy Miller fived it, Laurence Telling fived it, all the top riders fived it and I had a one.

"I was pretty much in the points straight away – obviously not winning – but I felt that with a fair bit of training and travelling intensively to various parts of Europe to learn to ride their types of trials I thought I would have a chance to improve myself.

"You have to bear in mind that European championship rounds weren't that hard in those days. I have no idea what sort of scores we had but my impression was they certainly weren't dangerous and the entry was quite big. There were a lot of riders who probably weren't that good at all but yet they were able to compete and ride."

Initially starting out on a home-built 100cc Yamaha, he swiftly progressed to a 250cc Bultaco before seeing out 1970 on a Montesa. Vesty stuck with the Mont through 1971 before he met a man who would help shape his career – and also help shape the course of trials.

"In '71 in Finland I first met Oriol Bulto who came to compete with his nephew Ignacio Bulto and he must have noticed me because after the trial he asked me if I'd like to try Malcolm Rathmell's bike.

"I remember Malcolm wasn't amused – from his facial expression I could see Oriol shouldn't have asked me to ride and try his bike without asking him first if it was okay – but I tried it and the truth was I didn't particularly like it.

"I thought my Montesa was better but when Oriol asked me what I thought I came up with a little white lie and said it was a really fantastic bike and later that year Oriol contacted me and >>



Dividing his time

Where Vesty calls home . . .

"I met Diane in the summer of 1981 and that's when I started travelling a lot back and forth to here. In 1982 I applied for the ACU licence and that's when I was living at Diane's parents' house and then in 1983 I got my resident's

permit and we bought a house together.

"I'd been living abroad on and off – in '75 and '76 I was living in Germany and after that I was living back in Finland. Towards the end of 1980 I moved to Andorra and I was a resident there until I moved to the UK.

"Home is here. We do have a house in Finland and I go to Finland on a regular basis so I have one foot here and one foot over there but I do spend a lot more time here."





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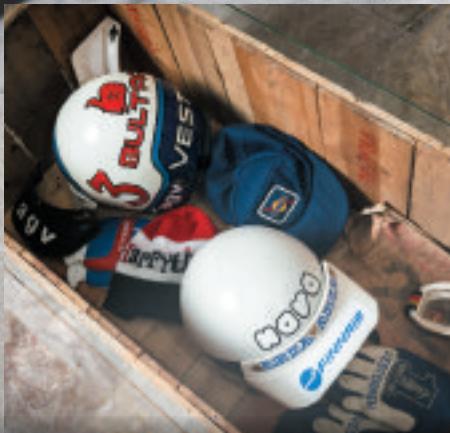
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Vesty on The state of play.....

As a man whose career has been tied up with trials for so long Vesty has, unsurprisingly, strong feelings on the state of the modern sport.

"My personal opinion is that I think a long, long time ago the FIM should have stepped in and stopped trials turning into what today has become what I call a bit of an extreme sport. When I was riding it wasn't an extreme sport and it was important to ride easy trials, medium trials and hard trials and learn to ride all the different types of terrain.

"I genuinely think it's a mistake to have allowed trials to turn into an extreme sport because as a consequence we now have a sport that's highly divided – with that I mean that the older boys like myself still wobbling along, what we do has very little to do with the world championship level of riding.

"Their level of skills, their type of trials riding – it causes confusion. If I was to go to a pub and somebody asked what I do as a hobby, if I was

to say I ride trials – and if they knew what trials is – they would say 'really, you ride all those big obstacles?'. No, no, no. I don't do that and if you then start explaining what you do it's going to be a long story and cause more confusion.

"I think today we probably have to accept we have two different sports and they're both called trials but maybe one or the other should be called something else."

By becoming so far removed from the grassroots of the sport, Vesty feels it could actually discourage people from taking up trials.

"Of course trials as it is now affects it at a grassroots level. If you look at the schoolboy scene, typically the schoolboy riders come from families where the father or someone in the family used to ride trials and they know that it's not that dangerous or that extreme.

"I don't see that many people coming from outside the typical trials circle because if a parent was to go and see the world championship they would say 'no, no, our little Johnny is not going to ride that' because it looks too dangerous and too extreme."

asked if I wanted to ride Bultaco in 1972 as a supported works rider.

"From '72 on I stayed with Bultaco all the way to the end of '79 when the factory didn't renew my contract. Their excuse was they were in financial trouble."

As a supported rider Vesty was able to dedicate himself to the sport although he continued to work part-time for the Helsinki Electricity Board where his mother was a Director. And he certainly wasn't living the life of a factory superstar...

"The first contract wasn't a handsome contract. It was enough to pay for the travel, it was enough to pocket a little bit of money but that in itself wouldn't have led to any sort of lavish lifestyle at all but that didn't interest me, I just wanted to ride.

"If I'd had to pay myself I don't know how long I'd have been able to continue. I certainly wouldn't have gone to places like Spain or France – that would have been too expensive – but the factory contract enabled me to do that."

Vesty finished second in 1979 behind flamboyant American Bernie Schreiber, was third in 1980 behind Swede Ulf Karlson and Schreiber and third again in 1981 as Frenchman Gilles Burgat beat Karlson to the title.

Along with 11 Finnish national titles Vesty also won the Scottish Six Days Trial in 1980 on a Montesa and the 1982 British championship riding for Comerfords Bultaco but, suffering from an ongoing injury, he decided his time at the top was over.

"The last world round would have been 1983. I didn't do the whole season then, I just did a few rounds. I was suffering from a very bad back in those days and it was gradually getting worse and worse so after a weekend's riding I was in agony for sometimes a week or even two weeks and it was pretty pointless to continue.

"Also it was not possible to get a contract to support myself on a financial level that would actually make any sense."

For a man whose life had revolved around trials it was a very pragmatic decision but he was determined to remain in the off-road world.

"Diane and I started Apico in the beginning of '84. It was only clothing at first. It might have looked like a successful operation but in fairness it didn't pay off just doing clothing on its own. The market wasn't big enough and in particular the motocross market was a lot tougher to try to get into than trials.

"Trials I think we were successful straight away but motocross didn't go that well. It was dominated by various factories that made their own clothing whereas I decided early on that I didn't want to get involved in owning a factory or having someone to work for me to make the clothes. We wanted to just own the brand and do the marketing but in hindsight we were probably about 10 years too early with that. Now it would be a lot easier because everyone's doing what I was trying to do then."

"At the time I found it difficult to compete against the factories that were making the clothing and selling the clothing through the importer network so price-wise we couldn't be competitive."

The cool head and iron will to win that had served him so well in his riding days also came into play in the competitive world of business and he made a decision that would establish Apico as the major industry player that it still is today.

"Eventually I realised that the off-road accessories market is a lot bigger than just clothing and little by little we started moving into hard parts and various consumables. I thought it would be important to offer a one-stop base for our dealers so they didn't have to order from 10 different places on a daily basis."

>>

Vintage IRON

Vesty's museum

Vesty keeps his trials collection in what he describes as a 'barn' but in truth it's closer to a pristine showroom with a workshop – as spotless as you'll find at a factory race team HQ – at the back.

It's in this workshop where he restores his extensive collection and the attention to detail is amazing. Date stamps on parts along with painstaking research allow him to keep everything as original as possible and the end results are incredible with concours-standard machines complete with authentic period decals.

"In fairness I did quite a lot of my mechanicing – not all the time but quite a lot – so some of the details were known to me anyway. I have to admit there was some confusion over some finer details but then I studied a lot of old newspaper cuttings and photos to make sure everything was okay.

There were some details I actually stumbled across like the carburettor markings and rim stamps – I didn't know the meaning of them until I started restoring bikes.

"I've been speaking to various people who are in the know – one of them who has helped me a great deal is John Moffat from Scotland who is very, very knowledgeable.

"I do enjoy looking into the details. For instance one of the things that is quite confusing is quite often the bikes' logbooks were recycled – my '76 world championship winning bike was first registered in 1974 with the registration number AR1 but I kept the documents all the way to 1976."

You have to see his collection to believe it but here's an abbreviated list of the bikes he has on display...

- His 1976 world title-winning Bultaco
- His 1977 world title-winning Bultaco
- His 1978 world title-winning Bultaco
- Bernie Schreiber's 1979 world title-winning Bultaco
- His 1980 SSDT-winning Montesa
- His 1982 British title-winning Comerfords Bultaco
- A 1966/67/68 Sammy Miller's works Bultaco
- A 1974 Model 133 prototype Bultaco
- His 1978 works bike used in the first part of the season
- His 1979 works bike
- Bernie Schreiber's 1979 US bike

There's also a very rare 1977 348cc long-stroke Bultaco as ridden by Martin Lampkin.

"I tried that bike but it didn't suit my riding style – I couldn't handle the brutal power and didn't think it revved out nicely either."

Vesty has a couple of motocross bikes on display as well – Rob Herring's Silkolene and Castrol Hondas. Herring, who won the 250cc British title and several GPs on the Castrol Honda, was supported by Apico and Vesty was a big admirer.

"I was a great fan of Rob's. I very much thought that Rob would be good for Apico as a sponsored rider which he was – he was a superhero at the time and brought a new style of riding to the UK. I very much thought he would and could be a world champion so I thought it would be worth trying to sponsor him which we did for a number of years."

After retiring from trials Vesty, who was recognised as an FIM 'Trial Legend' in 2011, even tried his hand at MX with varying degrees of success.



"At the Shepperton club in Surrey I received an award for the 'most improved junior rider' which I thought was pretty funny but I kept crashing a lot and my motocross career was not a spectacular one."

I didn't spot his Shepperton award but among all the imposing trophies and trials memorabilia in his collection there's a modestly-sized plaque on the wall that Vesty regards with particular affection.

"The Bultaco factory invited me to Barcelona just before Christmas in '76 when I won the first world championship and they presented me with this. The factory got a certificate similar to this because they won the manufacturer's championship and this is a copy of the certificate which they had made in silver.

"To my knowledge there's only one other like this which Martin Lampkin was given in '75 but after that they stopped doing it."

Signed by Bultaco founder Paco Bulto, it is inscribed simply...

'To Yrjo Vesterinen whose skill and determination gave us this title. With the gratitude of our company' ...

I met up with Vesty at his Lancashire home just after he'd returned from a vintage trial in France – a rare long-distance road trip for a man who's done his time behind the wheel...

"I could have possibly borrowed a bike in France but last time I did I really struggled with that bike and the way it had been set up and I almost felt it would be bordering on being dangerous to ride someone else's bike."

Still a keen competitor and – like all former champions – keenly competitive, I can't help but think his desire to do as well as possible was a major factor in his decision to take his own bike in a van rather than simply fly in and ride whatever was provided.

"Typically I try to ride not as often as I possibly could but if there's somewhere half-decent not too far away then I will try to compete. I don't think I'd like to ride just purely for the fun of it. I do like competing and I do like the idea of trying to keep your head together and not to come up with a lot of excuses."

"Over the weekend I was riding against Charles Coutard and Eric Lejeune was in the same team with us – incidentally, Eric is a pretty handy rider, I'd never really seen him ride – and Charles and I had quite a nice little dice between us."

"I do accept it's extremely difficult to be competitive and the truth is the last time when



I rode okay was probably about 35 years ago and that will never come back. That's impossible. Even if I practised a lot more than I do nowadays even half of that won't come back. That's just life. That's how it is."





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Photos by Ray Archer and Frank Hoppen





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The 2015 Motocross of Nations will go down in history as being one of the more memorable editions as the French delivered an event of epic proportions. The Ernée circuit was in prime condition, the weather stayed sunny and a humongous – and highly expectant – crowd filled the facility to capacity. But most importantly of all, the racers put on one hell of a show...

It's already a widely known fact that the French team took the overall victory after a day long brawl with Team America that was only settled by a decisive third moto.

Freshly crowned MXGP world champion Romain Febvre played his part well for the locals winning both motos in the Open category and Marvin Musquin did the same in the MX2 class ending his MXoN with a 4-3 scorecard (the 250Fs were way underpowered against the

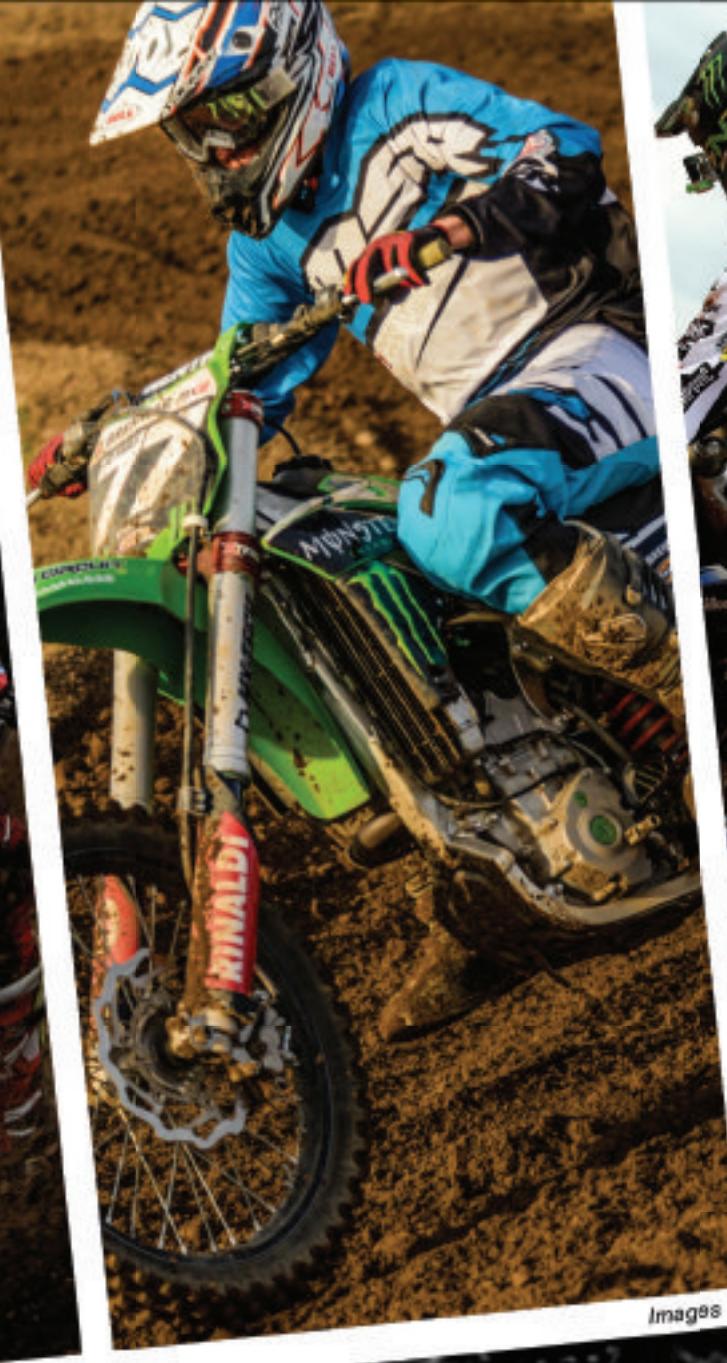
fo-fiddys up the huge hills of Ernée). Gautier Paulin turned out to be the weak link in the home side as his HRC Honda struggled under the weight of the #1 plate. Paulin's contribution to France's score was a fifth with his seventh in moto one being their throwaway.

While France's MXGP pilot was disappointing Team America's – we're talking about Justin Barcia here – was the standout. A 1-3 scorecard gave him the MXGP overall ahead of Evgeny Bobryshev and Ben Townley. USA's MX2 pilot Jeremy Martin went 5-5 against the bigger bikes while Cooper Webb finished second in his first race (MX2/Open) and sixth in the second which was binned for the overall classification. His speed in race three was actually better than Barcia's but a duff start and a crash hampered his progress significantly.

It was a weekend to forget for the Brits

as Max Anstie was landed on in the MX2 Qualification heat which meant the British team couldn't possibly put in five results. With Max sideleined super Scots Shaun Simpson and Dean Wilson raced for personal pride with Wilson going 6-8 while Simpson struggled to an 8-11 scorecard. 18th overall is not the result anyone was expecting...

Team Ireland actually went one better after qualifying for the A Final through Saturday's heats rather than Sunday morning's B Final which is something of a tradition for the gold, white and green team. Graeme Irwin was the team's best overall performer as he ran 25-30 on his 250F while Stuey Edmonds managed 31-33 in the Open class. Martin Barr's day meanwhile ended up in disappointment as he DNFed the second moto after finishing 23rd in the first!



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World champ Romain Febvre was simply unstoppable and his 1-1 results put France on top of the MXoN overall classification



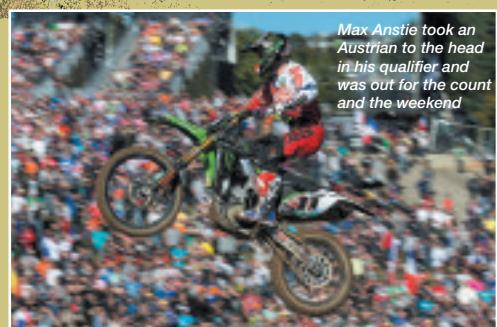
Graeme Irwin leads the Irish to 17th



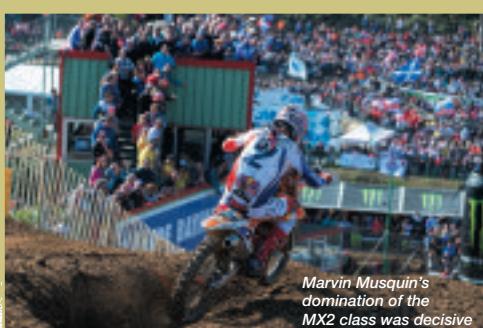
Max Anstie took an Austrian to the head in his qualifier and was out for the count and the weekend



The tractor race was a bit of an anticlimax for the huge crowd...



With Anstie sidelined Dean Wilson and Shaun Simpson raced for pride



Marvin Musquin's domination of the MX2 class was decisive



Jeremy Martin helped Team USA to second overall behind France



Super Swede Filip Bengtsson



RESULTS

2015 MXON

1 France	14
2 USA	16
3 Belgium	56
4 Estonia	66
5 Switzerland	67
6 The Netherlands	72
7 Australia	77
8 New Zealand	92
9 Germany	97
10 Austria	103
17 Ireland	142
18 Great Britain	33



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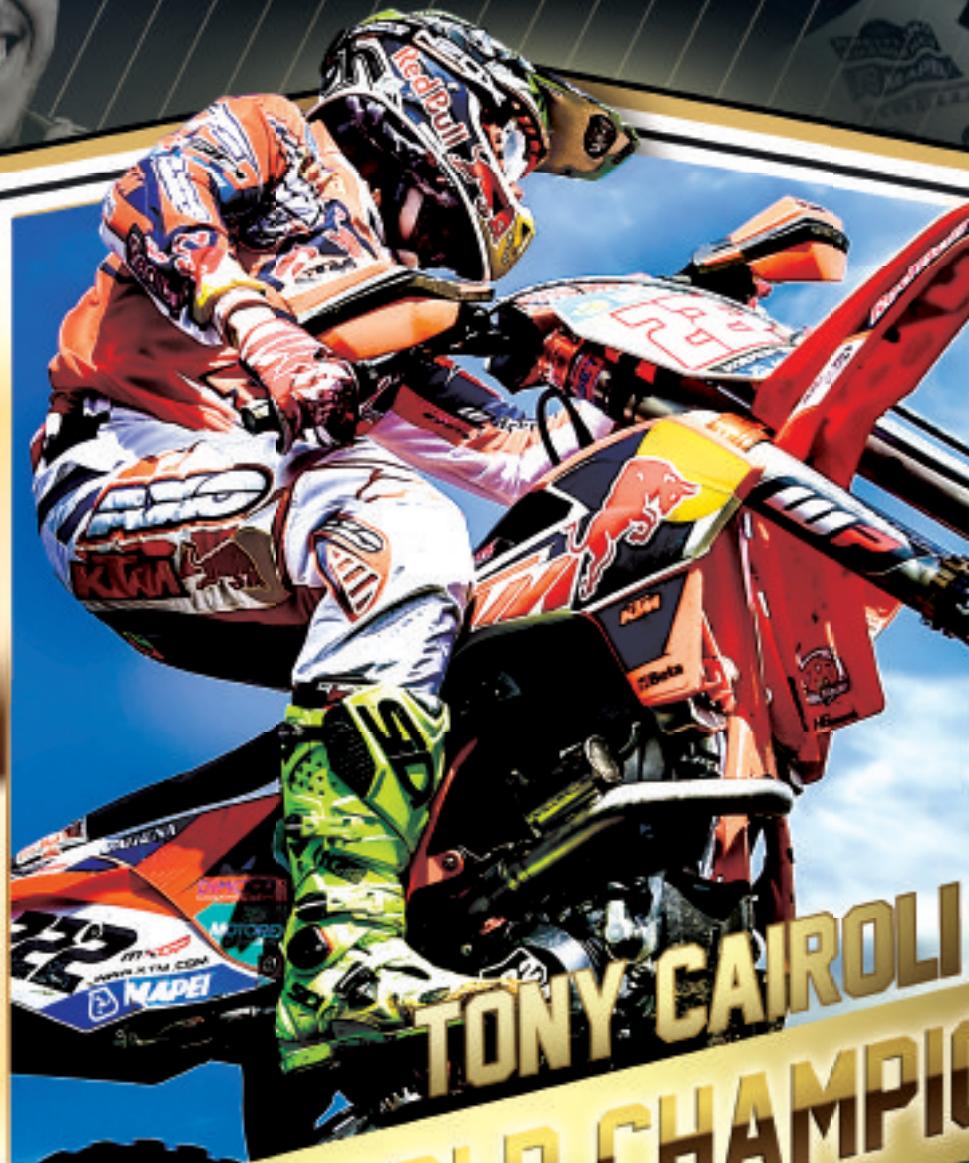


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JACK EDMONDSON REFLECTS ON A
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Under the guidance of his dad, four-time Enduro World Champion Paul Edmondson, young Jack Eddy has gone all-in this season. Embarking on his first full year of EWC competition the 18-year-old has both learned a lot and improved significantly during 2015.

Racing his eighth-litre 125 KTM in the Youth Cup Jack never missed a beat, finishing inside the top six in each race he participated in after skipping the first round in Chile due to 'budget restrictions'.

With no previous EWC experience Jack's coped well with the new challenges thrown at him, bettering his results as the season went on. Celebrating three second place results and

a total of five podium finishes Jack wrapped up his debut international season third overall in the Youth Cup...

DBR: Jack, now that your first full EWC season is over have you achieved what you set out to achieve?

JE: "It's been a great learning season for me. When we took the decision to compete a full year at the EWC the expectations weren't too high. The main goal was to race the whole season in order for me to get some proper experience from the highest level of enduro competition. The plan from day one was to make the most out of it so that I could be better prepared for next year. In the beginning of the year we thought maybe a top five would be nice

so third at the end of the championship is even beyond our goals. I'm happy and I've definitely learned a lot."

DBR: What have been the greatest challenges you've faced?

JE: "We opted not to travel to Chile for the opening round of the EWC so my first GP was in Spain. The most difficult thing was the difference between the British enduro and the world championship. We have three long tests in the EWC, which is really a lot of walking and there are many more lines, corners and points that you have to remember. There's a lot more to it than simply riding the bike. Every round of the world championship is almost a week's work. I walk the tests four times each, so there's >>

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a lot of work to be done prior to the weekend. The problem for me was that I had to combine racing with my studies in the UK so there wasn't much time left for everything."

DBR: From a top six at your first round to a second place finish in Greece. You've got to be happy with that kind of progress?

JE: "I was feeling better at every race. I was getting more used to the bike and also to the feeling of racing abroad. Round four in Greece was an up and down weekend. I struggled on day one. They had a long enduro test with too many river crossings. I came through one and the bike stopped. I didn't know what was wrong. I had no tools with me either as I was in the test. After three minutes the bike fired so I carried on.

"On day two I changed my attitude, rode smarter and finished second. That was my first podium and from then on I had some pretty solid results. My highlight was the GP of Belgium. It was a tough event where I managed to get two second positions. Getting another two podium thirds on the final round in France helped me end third in the Youth Cup which is great."



As rookie years in the EWC go, Jack's was pretty solid!



DBR: What areas did you improve the most during the season?

JE: "Just being there and riding the events has made me better. Every day at the world championship is long and tough so you get so much racing time and so much experience out of it. It can't be compared to anything else. In my case I was fortunate enough to have my father following my progression and giving me the correct guidance. With him always there to help me it's been easier and I've picked up a lot of things that'll surely help my career evolve."

DBR: How important is it to have the right people around you?

JE: "It's extremely important to have guidance and support from the right people. I'm really glad my father is always there and I can rely on his vast experience from racing at a top level. The truth is I don't know a lot about the EWC and my father's raced it for many years. Every question I ask I can get the answer from him and I believe that's a big advantage. Then I have my mechanic – Leo Cordingley – who knows everything about the bike and if I have a problem I can talk to him. I always have someone to fall back to if I'm in doubt."

DBR: What would it take to fight with the top guys in your class, to beat Mikael Persson or Josep Garcia?

JE: "Both of them have already done a season in the world championship and this is my first one. They're definitely fast but they've also got more experience with the different countries >>

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Despite his tender years Jack has a wealth of real off-road experience to rely on

and the racing abroad. I only race in England so to go to the EWC and get a third overall in my very first season is definitely good. I can't complain."

DBR: College verses racing, how do you manage to combine both?

JE: "I've been trying to focus on my racing activities a little more during the past few months but it's hard with my studies. For the EWC rounds I'm forced to leave college for a few days but I'm catching up when I get back. I have one more year and I finish college. If the racing goes good I can take some time and focus 100 per cent on it. We've collected the experience needed in 2015 and I think now it's time to start showing my speed and capabilities in 2016. Next season is going to be crucial and more or less it's going to define my racing future."

DBR: You've signed up for the SuperEnduro championship, which starts in just a few weeks. Do you think that'll help you improve as a rider?

JE: "I did some SuperEnduro races last year and that was good learning. To come into the EWC's SuperTest that's quite similar so it'd be great to get some more experience there. We've been talking with my father about the upcoming SuperEnduro world series and the decision we made is to race it. But personally I prefer traditional enduro racing. It's taken me to some amazing places in 2015 and I'm really looking forward to next year."

DBR: How would you like to see your career evolving?

JE: "We've got to take one step at a time. At this moment I can't be totally sure for the long run. The most important thing right now is to keep on improving next year and make a complete season with good results. The plan is to put a lot of effort during the winter preparing for next year so hopefully I can be up there with the top guys in the Youth Cup. I have two more years in that class but if everything goes according to plan I can get a good result and then move up to Enduro Junior."





Jack's keys to success!

#1 Use the experience

"It was a long season of racing the world champs that helped me learn a lot. Now it's time to use that experience to my advantage."

#2 Train on and off the bike

"In order to further improve my results I'd need more training on the bike and away from the bike."

#3 Race more

"On my first EWC round in Spain the heat was really tiring. I need to do more riding over in Europe before the start of the EWC season."

#4 Have the correct support

"In 2015 I had the guys from GP Motorsport helping me. It's definitely a lot easier with a team of professionals who know what to do around you."





Father Fast Eddy on . . .

His own international debut

"I started my international career on Japanese bikes in 1987 when I was 18 years old. I did my first two European Enduro Championship rounds but got injured. Then in 1988 I just did the Six Days and got a deal with KTM to race the European championship in 1989. We had some really good events back then, but hard as hell. Being pretty young, travelling Europe was the strangest part for me. My brother helped me in the beginning but I was lucky to join KTM Farioli from an early stage."

What he learned for the early years

"The experience I gained from racing those events was more important than anything else. The European championship was a good stepping stone. But it was different in my case, as I've already started racing the six days from 1986, when I still was 16. It's a bit strange because with Jack we didn't allow him to do the six days this year. I felt he wasn't 100 per cent ready yet. His riding ability is fantastic but he just needs a bit more time to learn how to work on the bike."

Enduro racing then and now

"In the 1980s and '90s we had lots of talented riders. Now there are a lot of motocross riders coming into enduro. It's changed from natural ability to sheer speed. The events we did then were totally different. When it rained things were getting pretty tough. If it rains now they'd just chop a lap off. Enduro racing was quite technical then. We had lots of races in the Eastern countries, like Poland, East Germany, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Now there are a lot more dry races. I think France is the most similar event to the ones we had."

Learning on the eighth-litre bike

"I spent a great part of my career and won three world titles on a 125 two-stroke. I think it's the best bike to learn on. It's a great bike to start with that makes you a better rider. With Jack's size we wanted to make sure he was on a bike that he was capable of being the boss on. Some of the best riders can ride a 125 really well. Our plan with Jack is to stay with the 125 for quite long and to not jump on a bigger bike too early."

The British Enduro Championship

"There were some great racers in my times too but I think the level in the British championship is the best it's been in a hell of a lot of years. Having the McCannery brothers and Holcombe battling with the older generation of riders makes for some great competition. Even a world championship rider would probably have his hands full here. With our guidance Jack's improving, climbing up the ladder and getting closer to the top."

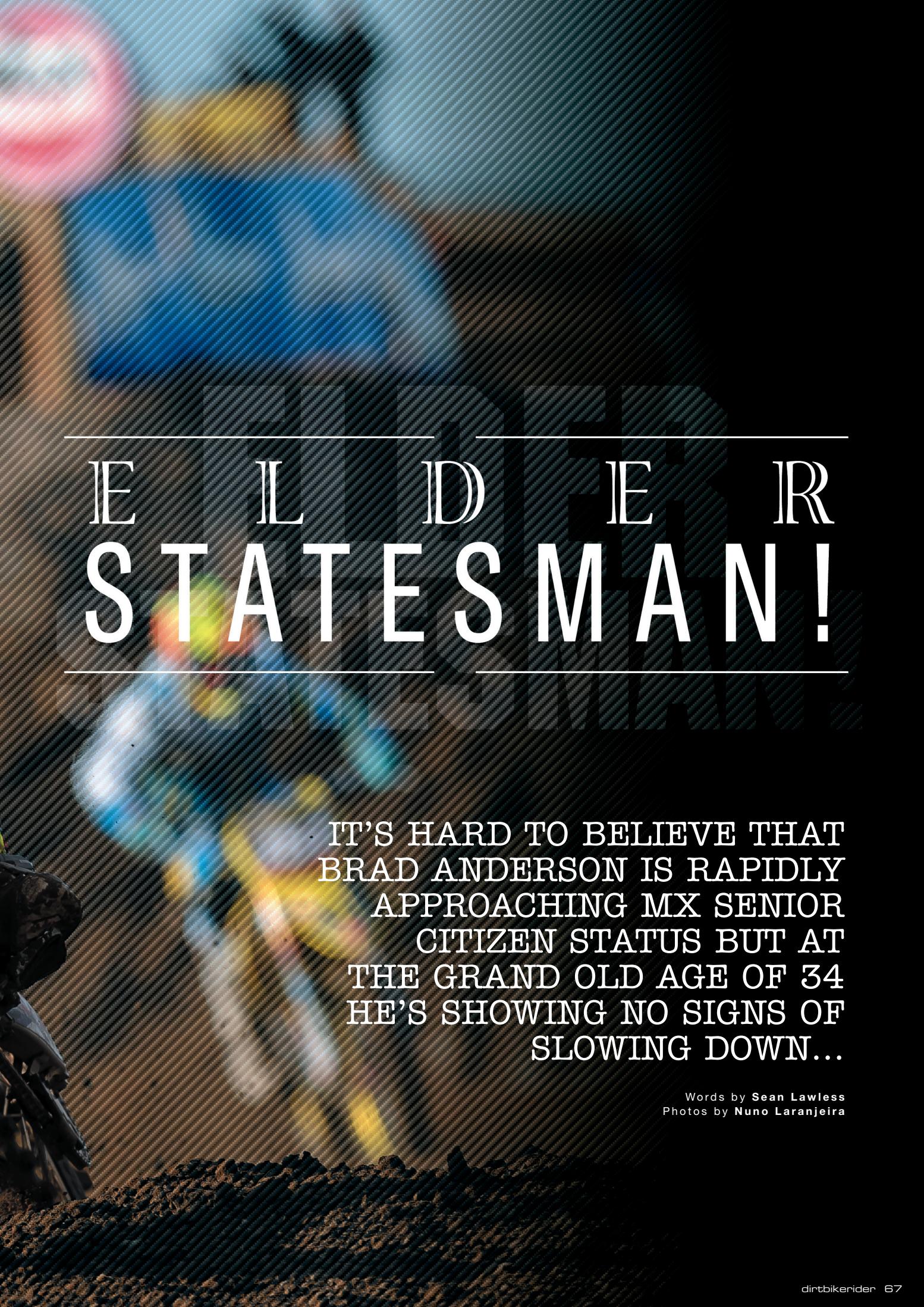
Fatherly advice

Jack on Paul's influence

"My father has been a great influence but there's a lot of pressure as well to carry on what he's done. He won four world championships and in a way people expect me to be there. I know it's really hard to even equal a score like that but the only thing I can do right now is to keep on trying. Hopefully one day I can win a world championship myself too."

BRAD ANDERSON





THE LITTLE ID E R STATESMAN!

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THAT
BRAD ANDERSON IS RAPIDLY
APPROACHING MX SENIOR
CITIZEN STATUS BUT AT
THE GRAND OLD AGE OF 34
HE'S SHOWING NO SIGNS OF
SLOWING DOWN...

Words by **Sean Lawless**
Photos by **Nuno Laranjeira**



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Fans love Brad Anderson. Straight talking, hard riding, uncompromising and brutally honest – what's not to love about him? Sure, he may not be the most stylish rider on the track but what he lacks in that department he more

than makes up for with sheer heart and commitment.

But with all the talk of his bulldog spirit, never-say-die attitude and balls-out approach to racing there's another quality that's often overlooked. And that's his incredible longevity.

He won't thank me for saying so but at 34 years old the North Easterner is the elder statesman of British MX and it's crazy to think that midway through 2016 he'll actually be eligible to race the national Vet class. Of course, it's not going to happen – instead he'll be pushing for podiums in the premier MX1 class and going for Euro gold in the EMX300 series.

"I still feel young at heart and my body still feels young," he says. "When it gets to a time when I feel too old then I'll pull the plug but at the moment I feel as though I've still got it.

"I'll keep going as long as I feel I can still win. Obviously, Shaun [Simpson] has been outstanding this year so it's been a battle for all of us for second and I've had my bad days but I've had good days as well."

Although he's still clearly very confident in his abilities, Brad's also conscious that over recent >>





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years he's changed as a rider.

"With my riding I don't feel as though I'm as aggressive as I used to be. I need to try and find where I've gone wrong because I need to try and get that back but it's not because I'm married with a son because I don't really think about that when I'm riding.

"I just try and get on with it because when you do start thinking about that I think that's when things do start going downhill. If you think you're going to hurt yourself and then think about the family that's when it changes.

"But now I'm older I do think a lot more instead of just going for it. I think about line choice and stuff like that and maybe settle for position – going for top three – instead of going for first and maybe coming off and getting hurt."

Next season is an important one for Brad. For starters, he's put high-profile outfits like LPE Kawasaki, Buildbase Honda and MBO Power ASA Yamaha behind him and signed for the fledgling Verde Sports Racing team. Then there's the hunt for European glory on a 275cc GL12 two-stroke Yamaha. Instead of thinking about slowing down, if anything Brad's speeding up!

Based in Chorley, 80 miles down the M6 from Brad's Penrith home, Verde Sports Racing is a relative newcomer to top-flight racing and Brad

– British MX1 champ in 2009 and 2011 with PAR Honda – thinks the smaller set-up will suit him.

"I've gone down this route because I enjoyed myself when I was with PAR Honda and that was based around myself and an MX2 rider and the Verde team is kind of the same so I feel as though it's going back to those days. I really enjoyed riding for PAR Honda and the atmosphere was great and all that helped.

"Everything's a risk you take but there's not that many deals left in the UK – it's getting harder – and the Verde team's an up-and-coming team and I feel as though if we get our heads together we could both do good out of this. Hopefully they'll get bigger and better and, obviously, if I get the results that will help them on their way to getting bigger and better."

The switch also means that for the first time in over a decade he'll be racing a European machine.

"I'm looking forward to the change to KTM. In 2004 I rode a Bikesport Planet KTM – it was a two-stroke though – and I did the British four-stroke championship but obviously they've changed drastically since those days. I can't see anything to worry about though."

Despite his solid reasons for the move, it's still a surprise step for a rider who finished just >>



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The track is Matterley Basin and the year 2006! Brad in MX2 GP action...



Ando failed to bond with the LPE Kawasaki

20 points from third in the 2015 Maxxis series. But, then again, it won't be the first time Brad's shocked the sport with an out-of-the-box decision.

Back in 2011, after regaining the Maxxis MX1 crown he lost to Evgeny Bobryshev, Brad disappeared Down Under for a year where he ran a strong fourth in the Aussie Nats.

He was back in the UK in 2013 with a ride on Steve James' LPE Kawasaki team but it wasn't a happy homecoming with a series of mechanical problems bringing a premature end to the deal.

"Steve's a nice bloke, his heart's in it and he always puts in 100 per cent but something kept happening with the bike and it kept breaking so I said if it happened again we were going to have to go our separate ways. It was mine and the team's local race at Whitby, I was leading and it let go again so I spoke to Dave Thorpe and he gave me a contract for the end of the year and the following year.

"Canada Heights was my first race for Thorpey and I got second on the Honda straight away. It felt really good to be back where I felt I should be."

A strong finish to the season netted fourth in the Maxxis and set him up for a good run at the 2014 title but, with Elliott Banks-Browne as his new team-mate, Brad was unhappy with life under the Buildbase Honda awning.

"To be honest they were developing the bike more and more but it felt as though Elliott was getting all the good stuff and I was the second rider. Ryan, Dave's son, was Elliott's mechanic and they were getting the bits so their bike was a lot better than mine.

"It was a tough one because you need the right surroundings and everyone to click and get on well and once you start getting the results it goes on from there."

The season was by no means a write-off and he improved to third in the Maxxis but Brad was ready for another change of scenery and he found it with a return to Roy Emberson's team.

"Me and Thorpey still get on well and I left on good terms but I didn't even ask for a deal for the year after. I don't know if he did have a deal for me but I was sorting it out with Roy. Thorpey asked me what I was doing so I told him the truth and obviously that's how he got onto [Kristian] Whatley.

"You need to be in the right frame of mind. Find the right team, find the right backing. To be fair Thorpey's team's professional but I'd rather have a littler team like Verde where I can just try and get on with it and do the best I can and, hopefully, they'll enjoy it a bit more."

It's a sign of Brad's fierce competitive spirit and will to win that he views fourth overall in the Maxxis this season as a disappointing result. He was certainly hoping for better at the start of the year after reuniting with the equally straight-talking Embo.

"Me and Roy have always got on well and, obviously, we expected better results. When I tested the bike it was running fantastic and >>



I got on really well with it. For the winter I got Whatley's bike and I tested that and enjoyed it but I broke it. So I wanted the same feel from this year's race bike but we never managed to get it exactly how I wanted it."

Brad's best finish of the season came at the opening Maxxis round of the year at Hilton Park when he lost second overall on a tie-break to Tanel Leok.

"To be honest I wasn't happy with myself at Hilton Park. The first race was all right but in the second I felt as though the boys were going a lot quicker than me. I would say I was probably lucky to get that result but it was still good to get on the box at the first one. I thought I was going to be on the box in second at Preston Docks but on the last lap she let go. There haven't been many highpoints this year on the 450 – I should've done a lot better than I have.

"At Preston Docks I showed my speed and that I still had it. Obviously, I didn't have it enough to beat Shaun but he's been at a different level to everyone else but I still have it for second place.

"It's a stacked field and people look at your results and think you're getting slower but everyone's upping their game. MX1's stacked. Shaun's winning GPs and then you've got Whatley, you've got Tanel, Gert, Irwin..." |



Brad gelled well with the PAR team and hopes to do the same with the Verde KTM squad which is a similar set-up





Anderson International!

Euro glory and GP rides...

Brad's career path took an unexpected twist at the end of July. Showing up at Loket in the Czech Republic for round five of the EMX300 championship armed with his own 250cc Yamaha two-stroker with support from Bob Buchanan's GL12 team, he reeled off a pair of wins.

A week later – this time upgraded to a bigger-bore GL12 machine – he was back again at Lommel and repeated his performance in the bottomless Belgian sand.

"What happened was I had a word with Roy and he had a 250 two-stroke and I bought that off him because he wasn't that keen on lending me it and I said to Bob that I wanted to do it. He didn't have a spare bike at the time so he took my 250 and checked it over and I raced it in Czech and won."

"It was only going to be a one-off race and then I was meant to be racing somewhere else in the UK and I rang Roy up and asked if I could do the last one at Lommel and he agreed with it so we did."

"For the deep sand at Lommel we needed something extra and Lewis [Gregory] wasn't riding so Bob said 'why don't you jump on Lewis' bike?'. It's a 275cc Yamaha and that had a bit more poke and it was a lot better in the sand than mine would have been and I just gelled straight away with it. It's so much better when you jump off a 450 onto a two-stroke – they're a lot lighter and you can throw them about more."

"To win in Czech and Lommel was outstanding – it was a good buzz again and that's what I've been missing."

Back-to-back wins on an international stage were a huge boost to Brad's spirits and the tastes of success has left him hungry for more.

"It builds your confidence up when you start winning again and I just felt as though I wanted to do these for next year. I felt as though I got a lot more out of it than the British championship. It felt as though I was winning a big championship race. You're with the GP boys, you've got all the crowd, a lot of British fans are there backing you and it's a good buzz when you hear the National Anthem on top of the podium."

"I'll be doing the British championship and the MX Nationals for Verde next year but if the

MX Nationals clash with the Euros then the Euros take priority because, obviously, I want to try and win those."

"There are only two people [in EMX300] who I haven't raced – Lewis because he hurt his back and Yentel Martens because he was out injured – so I really don't know how my speed is against them. But I feel quite confident after what I did at Lommel and in the Czech Republic that I can hopefully lift that title."

Amazingly, Loket was Brad's first taste of racing in front of a GP crowd since 2011 when he finished fifth overall as a wildcard rider at Matterley Basin. And he's open to more GP rides given the chance – even though he'd more than likely be the oldest rider behind the start gate.

"I wouldn't say my days of wildcard rides at British GPs are behind me but with some teams they weren't interested in doing it. I've always wanted to do it but Dave Thorpe wasn't interested and Roy wasn't interested because it was going to cost money and even though I said I'd try and pull a few lads together to pay for it they weren't that bothered in me doing it."

"But if the EMX 300 next year doesn't clash with the British GP then obviously I'll have a word with the Verde team and hopefully do it."

THE M A S T E R !

WHEN CONDITIONS WERE WET AND SNOTTY – AS THEY SO OFTEN WERE DURING THE SCRAMBLES SEASON – PAT LAMPER SEEMED ABLE TO KNOCK IT UP A NOTCH...

Words by **Andy Westlake** Photos by **Gordon Francis**

The 13th annual Sunbeam point-to-point in April 1959 was regarded as the wettest on record and when racing started the circuit which had previously been described as 'smooth and fast' quickly developed into a muddy mess. With the rain pouring down, the steep slopes at the top of the course brought many riders slithering to a halt but one who revelled in the grim conditions was a young man riding a works Dot – his name was Pat Lamper.

Around 8,000 rain-soaked fans witnessed the racing that day and at the end of 16 slippery laps it was Pat who took the win ahead of Mike Jackson and Brian Stonebridge with skills he'd developed from riding in trials.

Lamper was by then regarded as a 'master of the mud' and in a career which lasted over 20 years he became one of the best 250cc riders of his generation.

I first saw him and the screaming Dot in action at a windy Beenham Park in October 1962 where, after some memorable dices with Joe Johnson, Badger Goss and Don Rickman he ran out overall winner of the British 250cc championship races. With a thrilling days racing at an end I made the long journey back to Somerset in the back of my

big brothers A40 van – little then could I have imagined that 50 years later I would be interviewing the same man and sharing memories from those halcyon days of scrambling.

Born in Horsham Sussex in 1936 Pat was in his early teens when he saw his first scramble and it wasn't long before he entered his first event. "My dad had no interest in motorcycles but I became hooked after my friend's father – who was a great enthusiast – took us in his sidecar to nearby Oxford to watch a scramble.

"For me it started my passion for bikes and on leaving school I was keen to become a motorcycle mechanic but my father poured cold water on the idea and persuaded me to become an agricultural engineer. I soon discovered it to be very boring and stuck at it for about six months until I saw John Avery was looking for an apprentice in his bike shop in Oxford – I applied and was lucky enough to be taken on.

"It was 1951 and I'd already ridden in my first trial on a BSA Bantam and in the same year I also got a surprise outing on my boss's works scrambler. John was riding in the British GP at Hawkstone and after the racing was over he asked me if I'd like to ride his Gold Star around the circuit. >>



*At a snowy TV scramble on
the Dot at Retford in 1964*

The descent from the big hill was a bit 'hairy' but I guess I must have done okay because on our return he sorted me out with a rigid 350cc BSA and I entered my first scramble. This was at Midgham near Newbury and dad took the bike on a trailer behind his Hillman Minx car.

"I remember it was pouring down with rain which made the going extremely muddy but I stayed on and managed to finish first in the novice race. It was great to start with a win so I began racing regularly on the BSA and around that time I also had a go at sidecar scrambles – not riding but acting as passenger to the American George White and also a few times to Pip Barrett on his BSA twin."

Pat's career as sidecar ballast was a short lived one as with both trials and scrambles a change of machines had seen him upgraded to expert status.

"I pensioned off the Bantam and changed it for a 197cc James which I rode to events all across the South Midlands centre. It was a good little bike and I started to pick up a few awards in open to centre trials. In 1954 my dad also bought me a new 500cc Gold Star scrambler – this was a fantastic machine compared to the rigid 350 and within six months I was upgraded to an expert."

At that time the South Midlands centre was a hotbed of trials and scrambles talent and every weekend during the summer Pat was racing against the likes of Andy Lee, Dave Curtis, Joe Johnson and Frank Underwood – a plethora of talent who along with Lamper would later represent their centre in the Inter Centre team races.

During 1955 and '56 Pat rode the 500cc Gold Star to numerous scrambles wins but his winter time trials skills had also become noticed and following a recommendation to Small Heath 1957 saw him mounted on an ex-John Draper works BSA.

"Ralph Venables had a lot of influence within the factory competition circles and it was thanks to him I got the ex-Draper BSA. The same year I also got called up for my two years National Service but as I soon discovered Ralph was very good at pulling a few strings in military circles too so I knew exactly where I was going. I did a few weeks at Blandford Forum and then moved on to Norton Fitzwarren near Taunton for

my trade training.

"It meant that I could still ride in scrambles and every weekend my dad used to bring the bike down for me to race against some of the South Western stars including the Jarman brothers and Terry Cox. Later I was transferred to Bordon in Hampshire where I was posted to the 6th Training battalion and then into the motorcycle section with Pat Brittain. Most of our time there was spent teaching second lieutenants from Sandhurst to ride their bikes – two weeks training them on and off-road which was a huge amount of fun.

"Most Wednesdays we also competed in group trials riding against the Navy, RAF, Army and Police and thanks to our commanding officer – Captain Davey – we even had our own Nissan hut to prepare our civvy bikes in. We were given loads of time off and were told we could go and ride wherever we liked as long as it wasn't in a communist country."

Thanks to the Venables influence Pat was able to return home every weekend so there was no interruption to his motorcycling career and '57 was proving to be a good year.

"With Brian Stonebridge in their ranks Greeves were starting to challenge Dot as the leading two-stroke manufacturer and I signed up to ride for them. This was on the same day as a young lad from East Anglia called Dave Bickers.

"Two-stroke tuning was still a bit of a 'black art' but during his time at BSA 'Strawberry' had done a lot of work with Herman Meier and his Greeves was starting to go really well. In addition to the Greeves I still had my Gold Star and was also riding an Army issue 350cc Matchless in their trials."

In fact Pat became very adept at riding the heavyweight Matchless – a bike formerly ridden by Johnny Giles – and in October 1959 he won the tough championship trial at Catterick where he was not only best National serviceman but also best overall.

After 12 months on the factory Greeves Pat signed for their northern rivals Dot – his race debut coming in the Experts Grand National in July 1958. At the drop of the flag in the 250cc race he was soon dicing for the lead with his ex-Thundersley team-mate Brian Stonebridge but in a spirited attempt to overtake his front

wheel touched Stonebridge's rear tyre and Lamper stepped off leaving the Greeves man to take the chequered flag ahead of Triss Sharp on a Francis Barnett and John Harris on another Greeves.

It was the start of a long association between Lamper and the Manchester made two-strokes and that win in the Sunbeam point-to-point would be the first of many. For the 1960 season Pat lined up alongside Alan Clough and Ken Messenger as the works scrambles riders and also as a member of the 10-strong trials team. The same year also saw him move to Ellesmere Street to work and he told me how that came about and the set up at the Hulme factory.

"I came out the army in June 1960 and went back to my old job as a mechanic at John Avery's but later that year I landed a position with Dot's in Manchester.

"On the bumpy northern circuits the Dot's had the handling advantage but on the smooth Southern courses they were struggling to keep up with the faster Greeves and I was having all sorts of trouble with the gearbox. I was getting really fed up so my father suggested that I should take some time off from Avery's and 'go up and sort them out'. I was only there about a week when Mr Burnard Wade offered me the job of assistant works manager/comp shop manager – one which was a bit of everything.

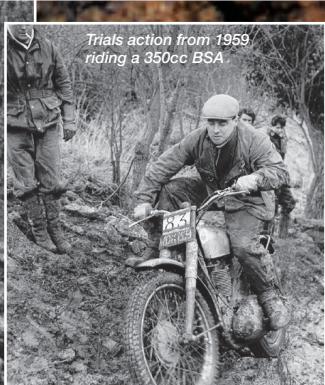
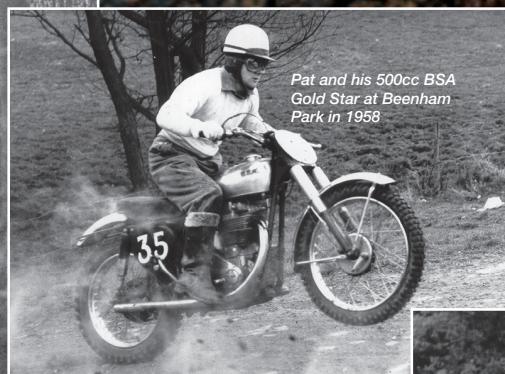
"The Ellesmere Street works was a three storey building – quite a small place – which I was told had formerly been a cotton mill and not the sort of place you would expect to find a motorcycle factory. The total workforce was only about 15 or 16 people and I looked after all of the works bikes in my 'comp shop' workshop on the ground floor. The ground floor was also home to the frame building and machine shop while the 'assembly line' was on the third floor which meant that when they were finished the bikes had to be lowered to the ground by a winch which was all a bit crude."

Burnard Wade had taken over at the ailing Dot factory in 1932 and was considered to be a 'good boss' but as Pat soon discovered the little Manchester company was a microcosm of the British motorcycle industry as a whole.

"Mr Wade was a nice chap but he didn't move with the times and he steadfastly refused to change anything to make the bikes more



Plenty of body lean from Pat on the 197cc James in the Oxford Ixion James cup trial 1954



reliable. The gears in the standard Villiers box had a rough time on a scrambler and often during racing I would lose third and would have to strip the gearbox between a heat and a final. It was an ongoing problem but he never did anything about it and any alterations that were done were usually scribbled on the back of a cigarette packet.

"At that time Alan Clough, John Griffiths and myself was the works scrambles team but our bikes were exactly the same specification as those sold to the public – in fact Mr Wade insisted on it. I had three works bikes, two of which I kept in the comp shop and the other one – with all of the go faster parts on it – at home which he didn't get to see. Undoubtedly the best bike I had was one with a Vale-Onslow barrel and expansion chamber which ran on methanol – this was really quick but we weren't allowed to run it on methanol in the nationals and by reverting back to petrol any advantage was lost."

Despite the shortcomings of the scrambler, the trials bikes were still extremely competitive and in the January of 1960 Pat notched up first class awards in the Vic Britannia, Musketeers and St David's and also achieved best performance in the muddy Hampshire Rose. There were also successful rides in the Scottish Six Day Trial – first class award – and the tough Scott time and observation trial.

But it was in scrambles the name of Lamper was spread to a wider audience in the Saturday afternoon TV events. Burnard Wade might have been slow to introduce changes but in January 1962 Pat wheeled out the new scrambler which promptly finished second to John Burton's works BSA in a televised 250cc race. With its Marcelle conversion and an all-new welded frame Pat quoted it as 'performing 25 per cent better than the previous model' with 'excellent racing characteristics'.

With the bike on a trailer made from Dot fork tubes he covered thousands of miles in pursuit of championship points and also spread his wings to continental meetings although this was not with the blessing of his boss.

"Before I'd joined Dot I'd raced in Switzerland in 1956 – I won the first race but retired in the second with an oiled plug – and I also scooped the International 250cc Irish motocross in Dublin two years on the trot. I recall that my first

'home' GP was at Beenham Park and it was the first time I'd seen a Jawa/CZ. They looked very much like a glorified road bike but were blindingly fast and in the races they left us standing."

Later in the 1960s Dot's Burnard Wade actually made a few bikes powered by CZ engines and they were extremely competitive – John Griffiths raced one for a season and it proved to be a very fast and reliable little machine. On the home front Pat never finished out of the top five in the important trade supported nationals or the British championship rounds but his desire to spread his wings to the international stage fell on deaf ears at Ellesmere Street.

"I loved racing in the GPs – perhaps my best ride was when I finished fifth at Midgham – but when I approached Burnard Wade about competing in the series he just wasn't interested. Along with Jack Matthews and Ken Sedgley I later got to ride in Belgium, France and Ireland but we had to fund all the entries and travelling ourselves."

With his smooth and controlled riding style a Lamper crash was something unusual but he recalled an incident at the National Cotswold scramble from which he was lucky to escape without serious injury.

"Although on the fast circuits the Dot was a bit short of performance it was very robust and other than an occasional broken spoke a breakage was something very unusual. As had already been proven by Bill Barugh in the 1950s the little two-strokes were more than capable of taking on and beating the bigger four-strokes so they made me a 350cc to try out.

"I entered it in the Cotswold National and I was going pretty well until I jumped through a gateway into a field when all of a sudden I went sprawling. I staggered to my feet and looked at the bike which was lying on the ground with the forks detached from the frame. On landing the jolt had snapped the steering head in half and the bottom of the frame had dug into the ground – it was hardly my fault but for some reason Dot went mad that I'd broken their new bike."

Throughout the sixties Pat continued to notch up numerous wins in both trials and scrambles

riding regularly for the northern team in the annual race against the south and during his career also tried his hand at both grasstrack and speedway.

"As a lad I did a lot of cycle speedway which was very popular at the time and in the late fifties I also raced in a few grass tracks on my scrambler – in fact I managed to win a heat at an event near Dorchester in 1957. I tried out a speedway bike at Belle Vue in Manchester and loved it but as I was riding in either a scramble or trial every weekend I just didn't have the time to pursue it."

After five happy and hugely successful years Pat left Dot in 1965 and for the following season raced a new Greeves Challenger. On the Thundersley two-stroke he quickly proved he was still a force to be reckoned with and there was barely a quarter-litre scramble when the names of Lamper and Greeves didn't feature in the results.

Success on the Greeves brought him to the attention of the UK's Maico importer Tom Jones who signed him to ride the German two-strokes in January 1966. Pat took over the bike previously tried by John 'Burly' Burton and at the time was Maico's only sponsored rider in the UK. As some of the 'continentals' had already shown the Maico was a seriously competitive machine and in March of that year Pat and Jones took a pair of 250 and 360cc engines to the factory to pick up some tuning tips. This quickly paid dividends and despite some teething problems 1967 was a successful season – one which culminated in the September when aboard the Maico Pat captained the north to victory against the 'old enemy' from the south.

Pat's last scramble happened on October 1 in 1967 and after that he and his business partner Joe Douglas took over a garage at Tickenham buying, selling and repairing bikes and cars. It wasn't the end of his competition career though because he continued to ride in trials on a Greeves, later progressed to a Bultaco and represented his new Wessex centre in the Inter Centre team trial.

He also tried his hand at sidecar trials and with his step daughter in the chair – described by Pat as a natural – he mixed it with the West Country's best until at the age of 54 he eventually called it a day.

CALIFORNIA

SEEING AS THOUGH HE'S WORKED HIS LITTLE ASS OFF ALL YEAR WE SENT TOOFAST MAX ON A MOTOCROSS VACATION WITH RACE SOCAL -

LUCKY GIT...

Words and photos by Max Hind

DREAMIN'!



VANS®
OFF THE WALL



At some point in our lives most of us have been dragged along to some random-ass beach resort in some nameless Mediterranean country only to lie down next to the sea all day and battle the ever growing boredom. It can become an annual dread – where to go? What to do? Who to take? A real pain in the backside...

But what if I told you that this problem could be a thing of the past? What if I told you that somewhere out there a holiday package existed that simply didn't allow time for boredom to rear its ugly head? What if I told you that you could take a vacation where all you wildest fantasies – well the dirt bike ones anyway – could be fulfilled?

If this all sounds a bit too good to be true than you better start believing as we're about to bring you along on our very own DBR vacation as we take an inside look at one of the world's leading motocross holiday providers. Welcome to Race SoCal...

Situated in Murrieta, Race SoCal is literally

located at the epicentre of American motocross. With neighbours that include Factory KTM, TLD and Pro Circuit, Chaparral, Temecula Motorsports and even pro riders such as Josh Grant, Davi Millsaps, Dean Wilson and Ken Roczen. And that's not even mentioning the multitude of world class tracks that surround the area on every side. There really is no other place on earth in which the moto scene is so dense and as expansive. Race SoCal really is at the heart of motocross and truly the pulse has never been stronger.

Almost the entire first half of the supercross season takes place in California along with the first two AMA Nationals, the USGP and Red Bull Straight Rhythm – while the final round of the SX series and Monster Energy Cup happen just a stone's throw away in Las Vegas – so things are looking good (and busy) for the SoCal scene and the same goes for Race SoCal itself. With ambitious designs in place Race SoCal plan to step things up a gear in way that no other MX vacation providers have done in the past. The future is looking bright for the company that

has its origins planted way back in 1992 when a young kid took part in his very first race at a local Stevenage scramble meeting...

Race SoCal is the brainchild of Stephen Heighton who after starting out at club level with the Stevenage SSC soon progressed through the ranks and as an adult became a regular qualifier at the Maxxis British Motocross championships in the early 2000s. Since that time Stephen has been able to build a very slick and sophisticated business with Race SoCal – however it hasn't always been the large well-oiled organisation that it is today.

Way back in 2004 when Steve was in California training and preparing for the upcoming Maxxis season he had an epiphany and realised that quite a large number of people wanted to stay and ride in California. However, the organisations present at the time were not really able to cater for such a market.

That's not saying that Stephen and Race SoCal were the first company to provide MX vacations because they weren't. There were several people doing so beforehand although in





Steve's mind they weren't doing it quite right. Therefore in his spare time while on his training trip Steve created a business plan and got to work right away. He started as a one-man band just renting out a spare bed and his practice bike to people that wanted to ride and train in California.

In the ensuing decade Race SoCal has evolved immensely from those humble beginnings in 2004/5 and as DBR flew in to begin our Californian adventure Race SoCal now boasts a fleet of 30 bikes, two huge ranches and one gorgeous suburban house. Knowing all of this it is safe to say that we were like kids at Christmas as we arrived and our SoCal dreams soon morphed into reality.

As we landed at LAX after our long and sweaty flight over the pond Race SoCal's secret weapon was in waiting to transport us back to the house in which we would be staying. When I say 'Race SoCal's secret weapon' I mean Mr Adie Rice. Adie is the guy that lives in the house, picks you up from the airport, transports you to the tracks, looks after the bikes, takes

care of you and generally ensures that you have a damn fun time while you're on your holidays.

The journey from the airport to the house took about two hours after encountering the LA traffic, however, it was worth the wait once we arrived at the Race SoCal 'premium' house. This is the quintessential American home in the quintessential American neighbourhood – when you imagine California living this is what you think of.

There's a huge garage with electric doors, two living rooms, a pool table, a lovely kitchen/dining area, so many bedrooms – I counted five – it's hard to keep track of and easy to get a little lost. And there's moto memorabilia everywhere – signed jerseys, posters and number boards!

But in my opinion the jewel in the crown of the Race SoCal house is its back yard – complete with chill out area, BBQ, swimming pool and hot tub. You really feel as though you're living the Californian dream as you float in the pool, basking in the sun after a damn good day at the track riding dirt bikes!

Now it is worth mentioning that we here at DBR experienced the 'premium' package. This is an example of how Steve has been very smart over the years and how he has developed – and continues to develop – Race SoCal to a point that no one else can really rival.

To achieve this Race SoCal has actually been split into two separate companies. Firstly we have the 'regular' Race SoCal – holiday makers on a regular Race SoCal vacation stay on the brand-new Race SoCal ranch which in their own words features a more 'hostel' style of accommodation. However, we've never seen a hostel complete with its own pool, hot tub, fire pit, snooker room and gym! The only thing that shouts hostel about this is the more shared style of sleeping arrangements and bathrooms. The ranch is designed to house and cater for larger groups, anywhere between 20-30 people.

On a regular Race SoCal vacation the entire fleet of bikes are Honda – whereas on a 'Premium MX vacation by Race SoCal' vacationers stay in the more homely premium house which sleeps 10 comfortably but could >>

AMA Supercross Ride Trips



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Choice of two locations both with pool and spa
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Race SoCal Anaheim 2 Ride Trip: 11 nights, 6 days riding, AMA SX Ticket - \$2295
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Premium San Diego 2 Ride Trip: 14 nights, 7 days riding, Club Level SX Ticket - \$3350

All trips include: bed and breakfast, bike allocated to you for duration of stay, track fees, fuel, pit support, freshments, airport transfers, use of vehicles to go to shops/restaurants, tours to Pro Circuit, Troy Lee, Chaparral and more....

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easily house more if need be. Customers here also have a multitude of brands and bikes to choose from and ride.

By doing this Race SoCal are able to cater for various demographics and ensure that anyone – no matter who they are or what their budget – can experience and enjoy the SoCal way of life.

At both locations breakfast is served up every morning and we can tell you for a certainty that it's a very pleasant feeling waking up to the sounds and smells of Angie cooking up a different concoction of breakfasts every morning from Monday to Friday. After all it's important that you stock up on food and energy and get the day started right because you're going to damn well need it!

Over our 10 day stint living in California six of those days were spent moto-ing at some of the world's best motocross tracks. We started out at Milestone before heading to Pala raceway, the next two days were then spent watching the world's raddest dudes do battle at the USGP and then after that we headed to Lake Elsinore, Cahuilla Creek and finally Glen Helen before revisiting Pala again for one last ride.

That's a heck of a lot of riding, especially in the Californian heat although we can truly say that each and every ride day was an absolute pleasure. The tracks are watered and groomed to absolute perfection throughout the day. I've seen tracks with half assed sprinkler systems over here in the UK – and in Europe – but that way of doing things (as well as the traditional tractor and bowser) pale in comparison to the Californian way of sticking a load of blokes around the track, arming them with big ass hoses and having them continuously keep the track hydrated all day long.

Once you've finished your session on track you can come in, hide in the shade, get watered and have a bite to eat whilst Adie and the rest of the Race SoCal boys check the bikes, refuel and make any alterations or adjustments that you might desire.

If I'm being honest I was a little nervous and a little apprehensive going in to our first day of riding. I've heard the horror stories and I've seen the videos of the ridiculously massive jumps and to put things bluntly I was a little scared. But I needn't have worried – I immediately felt comfortable. The jumps were big, but doable and they always had a little room for error, but at the same time you definitely felt a sense of accomplishment once you get them nailed.

The only exception to that rule was Glen Helen. That track really does live up to its reputation as one of the world's toughest circuits – it's scary, it's gnarly and there's not much room for error but there's plenty of room for terror! I can proudly say that I managed to hit every jump on that track but I did have one huge ball busting moment as I over jumped the biggest fecker on the track by a good ol' distance! That put me back in my place!

Other than Glen Helen I felt that all the tracks were safe and rideable for pretty much anybody. I expected to be passed left, right and centre by all of the blazing fast Cali kids and AMA pros but that wasn't really the case. Yes, there were a ton of fast guys out there but there were also a ton of weekend warriors and regular dudes so I really didn't feel out of place or out of my depth at any time while riding in California which put to rest my biggest concern about the trip.

Every track (again with the exception of Glen Helen) boasts multiple circuits of varying difficulty levels. So even if you're not quite confident enough to tackle the main pro tracks you've still got great amateur and vet tracks to choose from!

These Californian tracks do not run groups or sessions like we do here in the UK. At first >>





I thought this was a little irresponsible, I mean having pros and goons on the same track could be a little dodgy but in fact the open session format works great. Typically riders know their skill level and ride the circuit (pro, amateur, vet) that suits them best.

This format also allows riders to really just focus on themselves and not have to worry about racing others or anything like that while they are putting down their practice motos. Finally the open session format allows for a heck of a lot of riding to get done in a really short space of time. So the chances are you'll be spent and heading home to the pool just after lunch – and you will have logged more bike time than any normal practice day here in Blighty!

If we hadn't already been dirt biked out, two of our three days off were spent at Glen Helen in the scorching sun watching the GP. The trips to the big races are sometimes all that people really want to go for and I can totally see why that is. Yeah it's pretty cool watching a GP at Matterley Basin but its damn right awesome to go watch one at Glen Helen! It just adds a little more glamour to the whole occasion. I can only imagine what it's like during the supercross season – I'm guessing it's a whole new level of awesome.

On our third day off we were taken on trips to the TLD and Pro Circuit headquarters – both being cool little moto museums. After those visits we headed to the Go Kart track to unleash our pent up race energy in a flurry of questionable block passes and brake checks.

It's safe to say that there are plenty of things to do in California even if you're not riding (say you've brought your wife and kids along) – there are malls to go shopping at, tourist attractions to visit, activity centres all around and eateries everywhere you look! I mean Disneyland is just down the road for the kids and Vegas isn't a million miles away for the big kids! There is most definitely no excuse for boredom on a SoCal holiday.

One of the cooler things about staying and riding in SoCal is the true sense of a motocross community. And that community transcends ranks, amateurs and pros alike as they share the same track and the same paddock. It's pretty damn cool rubbing elbows with your favourite AMA superstars. We were able to spin laps with Justin Brayton, Jake Weimer, Michael Leib and young up and comer Bas Vaessen. We parked up next to the Villopoto family as Dad Danny spun some laps around Pala raceway and we had a good old chat and a laugh with Andy Wilson (Deano's dad.) We even shared the house with the Townleys for the first part of our stay and had Ben himself drop by for a dip in the pool. It was all really quite cool but according to the Race SoCal team those sorts of things happen on the regular and their punters never fail to love it!

Over our slightly prolonged stay at Race SoCal we saw a few different groups come and go. As previously mentioned we house shared with the Townleys but we also had three Italian dudes – who actually spent most of the time we were there partying in Vegas! And for the

second week a group of Swedes were making the pilgrimage. Unfortunately, despite my many prayers to the moto gods the Swedish Women's Volleyball team didn't turn up but in fact they were six middle aged weekend warriors who simply loved riding dirt bikes!

Since our return home I've been trying to rack my brains for both some positives and negatives to write about and honestly I'm pretty stuck. I have a huge list of positives – the tracks were great, the weather was gorgeous, the house was perfect, the people were friendly, welcoming and helpful and Steve, Adie and the rest of the boys (and Angie) were absolutely spot on. The only negative that I can really talk about is that we had to come home!

I think that you can easily get spoiled living the SoCal moto life. You come home and the weather's not that great, it's cold and it's raining, the tracks just can't match, they aren't built as good, the soils not so nice and the prep just doesn't compare.

But I think that can be seen as a good thing, I think to really appreciate what California and Race SoCal have to offer you have come in from the outside. The locals you chat with out there really don't realise how good they've got it, they don't realise how lucky they are to have so many great tracks within such a small radius, they don't realise how sweet it is to have places to go and ride every single day of the week and if a track isn't prepped to perfection they just won't ride it!

In my opinion you have to spend some of the season racing a few buggered tracks in the cold





and rain so when you go back (because trust me, once will never be enough!) you can truly appreciate what Race SoCal has to offer! I know for sure that I'm most definitely itching to get right back out there because there really isn't anything quite as good as finishing a great day at the track, not having to worry about checking or cleaning or maintaining the bike and just jumping straight in the hot tub with a cold beer in hand. That right there is what I think we all strive to live for. To live and experience this California lifestyle (which is basically the ultimate dirt bike life) is every rider's fantasy and Race SoCal facilitates the conversion of fantasy into reality.

But don't just take my word for it – our Swedish friend Fred Thyr had this to say when I asked him to pinpoint the best part of his trip – "I can't pinpoint just one thing, it's the entire thing. You get your own bike so you don't have to share anything. You can set it up as much as you want. For example, I'm a big guy so Adie adjusted the suspension quite a bit.

"The house has just been beautiful and the boys from Race SoCal have all been super nice. Hats off to them too as most of them rode bikes and then they had to come in and maintain our bikes while we were hiding in the shade! Anyone who is thinking of doing this should really just do it. Don't think about it – just do it!"

"When I go on a normal holiday I get bored after a few days and I have not been bored once here. This is the best holiday I have ever had."

Fred just took the words right out of my mouth...





STEPHEN SAYS...

Getting the lowdown on Race SoCal from the man that started it all . . .

DBR: Tell us the Race SoCal story. How did it all start? When did the dream become a reality?

SH: "I came out here at the beginning of 2004 to train for the 2004 British Championship. I soon realised that there was a huge market for people that wanted to come out here to ride and they needed places to stay and bikes to ride. There were a few people doing it but no one that was doing it the way that I thought it should be done.

"I came originally in January 2004 and then came back in January 2005. While I was here in January 2005 I built a business plan in my spare time and worked out what it would take and what I would need to do to make it viable. At the end of 2005 I flew out here in October and rented a house for five months and then literally my goal was just to advertise that people could come out here and rent a bed and come and train in California.

"I used my client base from my training schools to try and find customers and took it from there. Then people started asking if I had bikes to rent so I started renting my practice bike out and it grew from there. I started off with two bikes, then five and now we have 30 bikes."

DBR: So now you're an established business and one of the market leaders. Were you one of the first?

SH: "I think there were a couple of guys before us, a couple of guys did good before us and a

couple of guys that tried and failed before us. But I think no one before us organised it the way we did. No one had a definitive business model like we did. We came in and built a website and said this trip starts on x date and finishes on y date and includes four days riding a week, a day off here for bike prep etc. We actually gave it a very simple business model that we tried to stick to.

"Other companies were just doing what the customer asked – for example riding seven days a week, some people stayed for a week and some stayed for three weeks but there was no structure. I realised when a business got to a certain size, you had to almost tell the customers what they were going to do rather than the other way round.

"Most guys haven't been here before so we are the experts and have to organize accordingly. If you want a business to be successful you have to keep it simple and we were the first to do that. The other companies that are doing well out here have pretty much replicated our business model and website. That's the downside of a website – you pretty much spell it out for others to follow!"

DBR: So are you saying that your business model/structure is rigid or can customers still tailor a part of it?

SH: "Yes, if people wanted to do two trips back to back they could do it. In our quieter times we would hire bikes out by the day but in the busy trips and times we have to be strict so it's nice and clean when everyone arrives and leaves on the same day. That way my staff have time to prep and clean the bikes and the houses, etc."

"Doing it the other way with people coming in on different days and all over the place just feels messy to me. When I email a customer I try to find out what they want by asking them questions and then I advise them on what's best for them and sometimes it ends up with them staying for two trips and me doing a killer deal for them."

DBR: In your opinion what separates you from the competition?

SH: "The things that separate us are our organisational structure – how everything is set out. From the day you go and look on the website you can see exactly what you are going to do. There's no 'call us for a price' or anything like that. Everything is spelt out and it's very simple."

"The next thing that separates us is our twist as we have two locations. We have our standard trip which has hostel style accommodation and all the bikes are Hondas as a single brand fleet. Then we have our premium trips which have more bed and breakfast style accommodation. There are no bunk beds and just two to a room. The house is slightly nicer, there are less people on the trips and it's little more intimate and we run a 250 and 450 of all major brands."

"To make it a little more special we try and have aftermarket parts on these bikes too. Some of the bikes are ex race team bikes and they are just a little more special. So we have two styles of trips, the premium trip being 25 per cent more expensive. So the names of the two businesses are Race SoCal and Premium Motocross Vacations by Race SoCal."



DBR: What do the prices start from?

SH: "You can do a week with regular Race SoCal with four days riding for about \$1200. That doesn't include your flight. You get to LAX and we pick you up from there, you get a bed to sleep in, breakfast in the morning, a bike to ride for four days, all your track fees, all your fuel, maintenance, lunch and water at the track and our guys will clean your bike every day. If there's an event on then obviously we charge a bit more."

DBR: What else do you offer customers who come on vacation with you?

SH: "Riding takes up the majority of the time but on the day off we do tours to Pro Circuit, TLD and the factory test tracks. Our staff take the customers into town in the evening in our bus so they can go out to the mall or get something to eat. The general rule is when the staff come back at 11.00pm or when they have finished dinner the customers come back with us. If they want to stay out later then it's down to them to get back under their own steam. We do other stuff like karting and going to the shooting range and anything else that interests them. But mostly our customers are just looking to live the lifestyle of riding in the day and hanging out in the pool and drinking beers in the evening."

DBR: The other cool thing is riding with the MX stars?

SH: "Yep, you name a top rider and I've had customers riding with them on the track."

DBR: And the Supercross trips? Do you do all the Cali rounds?

SH: "Yes, next year we are doing A1, A2, Phoenix, San Diego 1 and 2, Vegas and Santa Clara then we do two Nationals – Glen Helen and Hangtown, the USGP, Red Bull Straight Rhythm, Monster Cup and the 2017 MXoN at Glen Helen. We also do a few specialist events that customers can do like Day in the Dirt, World Vets, World Two-stroke etc. It's a fun business and we try and get our guys to as many events as we can."

DBR: We thought most of your customers would be English but it sounds like it's not?

SH: "I did have a very big English client base but they tend to book late in the year whereas some of the other countries like Australia often book a year in advance. So when we sell out a Vegas trip a year in advance the English guys call me three weeks before the trips start and I have to let them down. However now we have expanded and have two locations we have some space to grow and more trips to sell."

DBR: Where do you see Race SoCal in five years time?

SH: "At the moment I am taking on some new business partners. One is Jussi Vehvilainen who used to race for CAS Honda and do the GPs and I think the plan going forward will be to have some more international ownership from different countries bringing customers over here and be involved in the running of the business and have access to our facilities. To try and make it a little more so it's not just a small one-man band business and it's got some longevity to it. Taking it to a level that I don't think anyone has thought about taking an MX vacation

business to. That's where I want to see it go."

DBR: You're called Race SoCal – do any of your customers race when they are here?

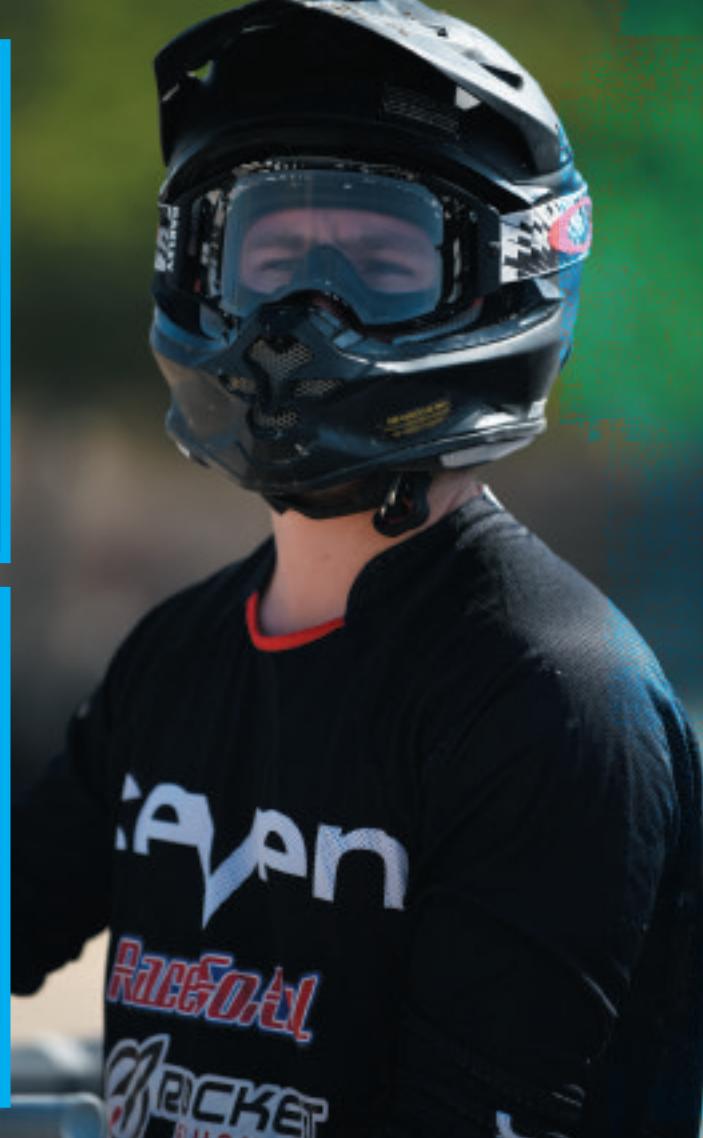
SH: "Yes, all of the guys get the opportunity to race if there is a race on the weekend. Most of my customers are club level racers and our core customers are 18 to 30 year olds who compete regularly at club level. They just live for motocross."

DBR: Can you list the tracks that you go to?

SH: "Our closer tracks are; Lake Elsinore, Perris, Star West, Milestone, Cahuilla Creek, The Ranch, Pala Raceway, Glen Helen, and Competitive Edge. Slightly further away we have Racetown 395 and LACR and then we have another track with a lot of online popularity called Zaca Station but that's a four hour drive which can turn to eight hours if you hit traffic on the way back. I have got one trip next year to these two tracks as a group of guys requested them. I said 'get me five guys booked and I'll do it' and they did!"

DBR: Some guys might think they are not fast or skilled enough to come...

SH: "What you have to remember is that there are more MX riders here than anywhere else in the world and the split of them being beginners and pros is going to be the same as in the UK. So for every pro that's here there are probably 2,000 amateurs/weekend warriors. There are probably 10,000 weekend warriors in SoCal so naturally the tracks are going to cater for them well and every track has multiple tracks to cater for all standards."





TRACK ATTACK! SOCAL SPECIAL

THIS MONTH
WE ARE TAKING
TRACK ATTACK
ON TOUR AS WE
VISIT FIVE OF
THE TOP TRACKS
IN SOUTHERN
CALIFORNIA. IF
YOU'RE HEADING
ON A MOTOCROSS
VACATION THIS
WINTER WE'RE
HERE TO HELP...

Words and photos by Max Hind

MILESTONE MX

Milestone MX is located on a former horse ranch in Riverside, California and is the only track in SoCal that's open every single day of the week. As with the majority of facilities in Southern California, Milestone features multiple circuits for varying skill levels – the main track, vet track, entry level track, a fully blown supercross track and even a minibike/pit bike track. It's safe to say that Milestone will be able to cater for you no matter what!

The Milestone soil is fairly loamy – not too deep yet not too hard. You really feel as though you have plenty of grip and sufficient meat for your rear tyre to chew in to as you lay on the gas. This awesome soil is the result of the continuous track prep that goes on throughout the day.

As with all of the SoCal circuits Milestone is unrelentingly baked by the Californian sun therefore watering throughout the day is essential to ensure prime conditions from sunrise to sunset. The Milestone crew do this by halting play every now and then to get their watering truck out and taking it for a spin around the track's run off areas in order to give the circuit a good soaking. This happens a few times a day, every day of the week, even during a drought!

Our visit to Milestone did in fact take place during a long drought in California so we were shocked/impressed to see that the track was

actually pretty wet when we arrived to spin some laps. As Milestone is the only SoCal track to open every day of the week the circuit can get quite crowded on the days when no other tracks are open. This is what happened when DBR came to visit the Riverside circuit. A combination of no other tracks being open, Milestone's own vet track being closed as well as the MXGP being in town meant that our visit was to be a pretty hectic one!

The sheer number of riders on track (which included a fair few MXGP and AMA stars) combined with the softness of the soil after its immense morning watering meant that Milestone cut up incredibly fast and incredibly well. Long, deep ruts were prevalent, which meant we had a crap ton of line choices and a whole load of fun railing said ruts! It was apparent however that this wasn't the norm for the local riders as they seemed to struggle in the ever so slightly damp conditions.

In terms of difficulty Milestone ranks at mellow level in comparison to its Californian counterparts however in comparison to our tracks here in the UK Milestone would rank at a mid/fairly difficult level. The main track features some pretty big (very big if you're from the UK) doubles and triples that are large enough for you to have to think about but not so big that they are too daunting. That being said you do still feel a sense of accomplishment once you get them nailed!

All of these jumps can easily be ridden without having to commit to clearing the whole lot. That combined with the confidence inspiring soil means that Milestone is inviting for pretty much anybody.

>Fun factor > Railing ruts and hucking triples. What's not to love?

>Overall DBR score > Great soil and a great time.



PALA RACEWAY

Pala raceway is found on a Native American reservation just down the road from the Race SoCal house. This former member of the AMA pro national tour has built quite the online reputation, it almost seems a regular occurrence to log on to Facebook to find a new video of yet another insane leap being made at Pala. These videos of these insanely huge jumps could quite understandably instil a wee bit of terror within an innocent Englishman that is accustomed to keeping his wheels on the ground. However you need not worry.

Again, as with most of the SoCal circuits, Pala features a whole variety of tracks for you to choose from. The Vet track is pretty mellow with some really nice bowl berms and very forgiving jumps, the main track on the other hand is pretty much a supercross circuit on steroids! Its fast, the jumps are massive and it's pretty damn scary. So if you feel that the vet track doesn't quite challenge you enough and that the main track is just slightly too terrifying then the 'amateur' is the one for you. This is where DBR spent most of our time on our two trips to Pala. The amateur track is fun yet challenging, the jumps are pretty sizable without being as frightening as the main tracks massive leaps, and there are also a couple of hills and elevation changes thrown into the mix.

The soil at Pala is slightly more hardpack underneath than some of the other SoCal

tracks but there is still a nice sandy/loamy layer on top that provides some really nice berms to bash. Although, unlike Milestone you have to be careful when and where you lay on the power as the hard, slick surface underneath can easily catch you off guard.

The track care at Pala is second to none – perhaps even the best track care that I've seen anywhere in the world. Again, as with all the SoCal tracks watering throughout the day is a must. But the method that Pala raceway employs is extraordinary. Dotted around the track you'll find several blokes armed with a big ass sombrero and a big ass hose. These dudes roam about the track all day long watering as they go, keeping the dust down and the conditions prime. Using this method means that there's absolutely no need to stop any riding – the guys see you coming, they quickly switch off their hose, they watch you go by and then the hoses are turned back on and the watering continues.

We can safely say that Pala was one of the most enjoyable tracks to ride and it only narrowly missed out on the top step of our SoCal Track Attack podium.

>Fun factor > We bashed in an entire 20 minute moto in the sweltering SoCal heat for no other reason than we were just having too much fun to stop!

>Overall DBR score > A damn good time...

LAKE ELSINORE

Lake Elsinore is the closest of the Californian tracks to the Race SoCal premium house situated just a short 15 minute drive down the freeway from Murrieta. Many of you will recognise this circuit as a former AMA National track and for that reason alone we were very excited to check it out.

Yet again Lake Elsinore features many different tracks to choose from DBR did laps around both the Vet track and the main track. The Lake Elsinore vet track features a nice, flowing layout with some very nicely shaped jumps that aren't all that big. The main track however does feature a handful of big jumps. Although these can be cleared by the Average Joes fairly easily but nevertheless you still feel pretty proud once you've done them. Compared to the jumps you'll find here in the UK the Lake Elsinore doubles and triples will be bigger than most things you've tried before!

The layout of the main track is fun and flowing with lots to remember, lots of corners and loads of jumps – with multiple lines and combos to hit.

The soil at Lake Elsinore is definitely the most hardpack and the least loamy of the SoCal tracks that we visited. It also must be said that Lake Elsinore was the worst prepared of the Californian tracks. The tracks had a light watering in the morning which made the vet track very slick and a little treacherous to start but after that early

morning water both circuits were left well alone for the rest of the day meaning that it got pretty dusty as the day went on. That's something that we are very accustomed to here in the UK but the SoCal locals just won't put up with it.

This meant that Elsinore was very quiet on our visit and we felt as though there was a definite lack of 'buzz' about the place, something that the other SoCal tracks had by the bucket load. Watering wasn't the only area of track care that Elsinore lacked, whereas Milestone and Pala were graded to perfection before the first laps were ridden I felt as though Elsinore was left a little longer between grading sessions. The vet track still had lines grooved in from the previous days riding and the main track was very marbly with only one main line. Never the less it was still damn fun to ride once you got into a decent flow, with some very enjoyable jumps that provided a whole lot of airtime to try and get a little rad.

SoCal can definitely spoil you, you expect the tracks to be flawless and to be groomed to perfection. Here in the UK we are just grateful that tracks are open midweek – who cares if they aren't groomed to perfection. So you can kind of forgive Elsinore for not being flawless on a Monday morning! It's just unfortunate for them that their competition is so damn good!

>Fun factor > Big jumps means plenty of bum whips.

>Overall DBR score > Could be taken care of a little more but still a cool layout with very fun jumps.





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CAHUILLA CREEK

Up in the Californian mountains Cahuilla Creek is located a few thousand feet above sea level, my ears actually popped on the way up to the track! You really feel as though you are out in the sticks at Cahuilla. You can't help but think what a little gem this place is a little piece left over from the Californian gold rush!

Yet again Cahuilla features three different tracks for varying abilities and the flowing, natural terrain ensures a good time for everyone. The Cahuilla Creek soil is very powdery and probably the most sand like of the bunch without actually being sand.

Ruts were few and far between at Cahuilla and berm bashing was the aim of the game with the powdery nature of the soil meaning that there were plenty of berms to bury in to! The almost sandy qualities of the Cahuilla Creek soil meant that the track did get particularly choppy as the day wore on which made a nice change after riding snooker tables for the most part of our SoCal adventure.

Being up in the mountains you'd expect there to be elevation changes and so there was but nothing too dramatic. The layout of the main track featured two big tabletops with long downhill landings which were very fun. In fact that's about as big as it got at Cahuilla – there were no ridiculous doubles or triples. Well not on the version of the track that we rode at least.

Again the track maintenance at Cahuilla was top notch. Here they used the Milestone method of employing a big water truck and driving it around the outside of the circuit although here we didn't have to stop riding in order for them to water. They simply just switched off the water bowser as you went by and then continued with their watering duties.

The lack of scary jumps at Cahuilla as well as the flowing layout meant that the main track was accommodating for everyone. The amateurs and vets could enjoy it at the same time as the experts and the pros. We certainly couldn't get enough of Cahuilla Creek.

>**Fun factor** > Ear to ear grins as standard.

>**Overall DBR score** > Californian King.

GLEN HELEN



GLEN HELEN

Glen Helen is one of the world's most famous motocross tracks. In recent times it's been the home of the USGP and it's always been a staple circuit on the AMA National tour. It's the gruelling training ground for many of the top AMA racers as they prepare for the outdoor series and it's been immortalised in video games on several occasions. When you're in SoCal you just can't pass up on the opportunity to ride this infamous circuit, right?

Glen Helen has built up a reputation as being one of the toughest tracks there is and rightly so – it's freaking gnarly. And that's exactly why the American superstars choose to make it their Californian testing spot. Unlike the rest of the SoCal facilities Glen Helen only has one track open for riding on an ordinary day and that's the mother fudger with the big hill!

As you'll know from watching the GP and the Nationals, the Glen Helen soil has a sandy,

loamy nature to it that really chops up and makes for a tough race circuit. And you'll also know that Glen Helen features a few very big leaps...oh and there's also that hill. It's safe to say that Glen Helen is most definitely not for the faint of heart.

You have to be on your toes at all times and there's almost no time to relax because Glen Helen can bite you back and bite you back hard. Don't get me wrong, I think most riders of a decent enough level will be able to get around without a problem – the jumps can be rolled and the hill can be climbed – but you just have to realise that you're not going to feel as confident or so much of a pro as you would riding around your local spot.

Glen Helen demands respect and if you oblige then you'll be fine...

>Fun factor > Butt clenching fun.

>Overall DBR score > The scariest track in SoCal but it's gotta be done!



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Jem Whatley (Suzuki) leads Jacky Vimond (Yamaha)
during the 1984 British 250GP at Newbury

DOUBLE DUBLING

THE GOLDEN TIMES WHEN DAVE THORPE AND JEM WHATLEY TOOK GP VICTORIES ON THE VERY SAME DAY BUT AT DIFFERENT LOCATIONS AROUND THE WORLD...

Words and photos by **Jack Burnicle**

The historic grand prix victories at Lommel by Shaun Simpson and Max Anstie represented the first time two Brits had won on the world stage on the same day since Gordon Crockard (250 Honda) and Jamie Dobb (125 KTM) doubled up at Genk, also in Belgium, in 2001.

This was in fact only the 10th time since world championships began that a pair of British riders had achieved such a unique equation. 'Crockstar' and 'Dobber' also did the deed at Grobbendonk (Belgium again!) in 2000 but of course in years previous GP classes were contested in different countries across the continent and beyond, often on the same weekends. Kurt Nicoll (KTM) triumphed at Folkendange, in the Luxembourg 500GP in 1992, the same day – August 9 – that Rob Herring's 250 Honda won at Heinola, in Finland!

Our original UK champions of the 1960s, iron man Jeff Smith and the exuberant, immensely popular Dave Bickers twice racked up the Great British grand prix double. On May 24, 1964 Smith, on the way to his first world title on a 420cc factory BSA, won the Dutch 500GP at Norg, in the north of Holland. That same day Dave was winning the Luxembourg 250 round on his Greeves.

Almost 12 months later Smith took the

honours in the French 500GP as Bickers mounted the top step of the Belgian 250GP at Hechtel. But 19 years would elapse before two great rivals of the 1980s replicated this feat. In fact Dave Thorpe and Jeremy Whatley amazingly doubled up on no less than four occasions and I was each time privileged to be at one venue or the other – twice with David and twice with Jem!

They were raw youngsters when, on May 20, 1984, both registered their first ever grand prix successes. I attended Newbury and District Motor Club's British 250GP at the Fox and Hounds, a track still faintly visible from the A34 Newbury by-pass. Fast, stony and treacherous, it hosted the fifth round of a world championship led by lanky Austrian Heinz Kinigadner (KTM). Jem and his Heron Suzuki lay fourth, a point behind Jacky Vimond's Yamaha.

After a thrilling first moto duel, outcome in doubt right to the flag, he narrowly lost out to Kawasaki UK wild card and local boy Andy Nicholls, both beating 'Kini' in a loudly cheered duel. In race two Whatley's perplexed Australian mechanic 'Radar' urged on his man, unaware that elsewhere round the track his manager Dave Grant was slowing him down!

A confused Jeremy finished only fourth, behind Jorgen Nilsson (Honda) and current

Wilvo Nestaan team boss Jacky Martens (KTM), but with Nicholls, Kinigadner and Vimond all striking trouble it was enough to secure Whatley's maiden grand prix victory and hoist him to second place in the series!

That same day Thorpe and his factory Honda were at Limhamn, outside Malmö, on the extreme southern tip of Sweden. Unfortunately Dave's luggage had gone to Tokyo, so he had to do a quick emergency stop in Sweden's third largest city!

His hastily assembled new wardrobe complete, he turned his attention to round five of a massive 500 series in which the top four were separated by just 10 points, David joint second with Kawasaki's Georges Jobe, five behind Andre Malherbe and five ahead of his other Honda factory team-mate Eric Geboers. And after an incredible afternoon 'Thorpey' had not only clinched his maiden grand prix victory by winning race two, but moved past first race winner Malherbe and led the world championship!

Two months later these two contrasting characters did it again but what a difference eight weeks can make because by then both had suffered disastrous trips to North America. Jem, after trading wins with Martens in Germany, lay second to Kinigadner in the 250 >>

table before a miserable trip to Unadilla where he scored zilch. But at Nismes on July 22, two strong second places brought overall victory for Whatley in the Belgian round and restored his championship chances.

That same weekend we were at Hawkstone Park for the British 500GP. Thorpe had headed Stateside a challenging second to Malherbe but a modest day at Carlsbad, Southern California was followed by an awful weekend at Chatsworth Moto Park in Canada. Two crashes meant no points as Jobe and Malherbe went one-two and moved well ahead in the title table. So David arrived in Shropshire with a point to prove and, despite never attempting the new double jump where Jobe famously leapt over Malherbe's head, pummelled to a crowd-pleasing double win ahead of fabled sandmeister Andre Vromans and Jobe before going on a rapturously received lap of honour.

Thorpe and Whatley would both end the

season third in their respective classes, the former despite winning all six motos of the last three 500GPs in the UK, Belgium and Italy. But it would be almost four years before they once more swept simultaneously to grand prix success, on the opening weekend of the 1988 world championship season. Thorpe was at Sittendorf, Austria, Whatley at Salindres, in the south of France.

And Dave, now a double world champion, was worried about Jem. "I know he's nervous," said Thorpe. "He hasn't ridden abroad this year except for one race in Italy so he's panicking because he doesn't know how fast the other guys will be. I've told him to ride his own race, find his own pace. If it's quick enough and he's at the front, he'll win. He's that sort of rider when he's in the lead. I really would like to see him do well..."

While I flew to Marseilles with Suzuki boss Graham Beamish and the former 'King of

France', Elsworth's Andy Lee, Heron Suzuki manager Rob Hooper, averse to flying, drove the team camper down with wife Cheryl! After an initial panic over his mislaid entry, Jem rode number 99 out of 99 entries. He opted to stay in the race truck with new wrench, EBB's dad Ian Browne and, as Thorpe predicted, was nervous and touchy the night before the race.

An unseasonably cold, wet Saturday afternoon meant that Salindres, sited on the French Riviera in the rugged, rocky landscape of La Gard was in perfect nick for Sunday's races. All the focus of visiting technicians and bigwigs from Suzuki Japan was on American newcomer Rodney Smith and his Chesterfield backed Rinaldi bike but Jem and eagle-eyed old timer Lee had sussed out the starting gate. "If you look through the slots between the metal sheets you can see some small rollers," explained Andy. "As soon as those rollers move, you can go!"



Jem Whatley (Suzuki 99) holeshots and wins opening moto of 1988 250 world championship in France

And Whatley did, coolly controlling the first moto as Thorpe had predicted, perfectly poised and picking immaculate lines to finish well clear of Yannig Kervella (Honda) and the factory Yamaha of reigning 125 world champ John van den Berk. The sun even shone briefly on the yellow Suzuki as it crossed the line!

Whatley muffed his second race start though and never quite made contact with a thrilling race up front in which wily 30 year-old Italian Beppe Andreani (WP Honda) outwitted young upstarts Smith and van den Berk. But Jem's fourth place ensured overall victory and the 25 year-old Hampshireman's return to his cocky, abusive best.

News of his first-race triumph filtered through to Sittendorf just as Thorpe returned to the pits after winning the first moto of the Austrian 500GP. "I don't know who he was happiest for, himself or Jem!" laughed Mrs Thorpe. Having beaten Kawasaki's Kurt Nicoll in that first moto round the rough, stony climbs of Sittendorf, Dave went out and won race two, beating a

Team Green trio of Hakan Carlqvist, Billy Liles and Nicoll.

Both Whatley and Thorpe would remain in contention for their respective world titles until round nine of the 12-round championships before being sidelined by injury, Jeremy breaking his leg in a practise crash at Matchams Park, near his Ringwood home and David wrecking his shoulder during training at the Dutch Grand Prix. But 12 months to the very weekend after their Austro-French duet they would once more open up their title chasing campaigns with dual victory on April 16, 1989!

David had already been badly beaten in the opening joust of the 500cc season at Valkenswaard, in Holland before I flew out of Heathrow with him, heading for Bordeaux and the French GP at St Jean d'Angely. He had flown this very route just seven days earlier, en route to a sound thrashing in a French international at Castelnau de Levis, beaten by Nicoll and Aussie grand prix rookie Jeff Leisk.

"This weekend will be different," Thorpe vowed menacingly. He knew Leisk would be a threat. "He has one of our 1988 factory engines," smiled DT. "The only guy I've ever heard who revs a bike more than me!" David unofficially clocked fastest time during Saturday free training in France. But the weather forecast threatened heavy storms. As qualifying ended that afternoon the rain began. By early evening it was lashing down...

Throughout the night and following morning it poured, yet hordes of hardy French fans turned out, many eager to see their hero Jacky Vimond, on his special monocoque Honda, whose first ever world championship race win was registered here in 1984.

With the track virtually under water and rain still slanting down a good start was surely essential. Defending champion Eric Geboers (Honda) shot ahead of Jacky Martens (KTM) as a fallen collected Vimond into the saturated first turn. Yet he somehow smashed and slithered his way from 38th to 11th in one inspired lap to



Dave Thorpe (Honda) hammers Hawkstone Hill on his way to a perfect double in perfect weather at the 1984 British 500GP



Dave Thorpe after heroic second moto victory in the 1989 French 500GP

a cacophony of klaxons as Thorpe, taking a hail of stones in both eye and mouth, fought past a stubborn Leisk to take third place. But poor Jacky, sixth on the penultimate lap, had his chain snap. The crowd loudly applauded their stricken hero's sludgy trudge back to the pits. Thorpe, sporting a thick lip and swollen left eye, threatened revenge. "I feel like the Elephant Man," he growled. "But if I get the start I'll win the next one..."

The sun broke eerily through between races but as the gate dropped for race two rain once more drove through the valley. Max Anstie's dad Mervyn, on his Honda, leapt into an initial lead from Vimond. A great roar rose up to announce that Jacky led, lapping a fallen Leisk on his second circuit. Behind him the Brits battled, Anstie, Kurt Nicoll (Kawasaki) and Thorpe in line astern.

The rain finally abated and a grippy drier line emerged on some of the climbs. Nicoll erred and Thorpe cut ruthlessly inside then swept past Anstie. Launching himself luridly down those steep, rocky hills David caught Vimond and to a deafening crescendo of excitement Jacky lost traction on the penultimate sharp climb of the final lap. Thorpe powered emphatically past to take the chequered flag and overall victory, fists clenched exultantly above his head. "Jacky just missed the rut and I took my chance," he said modestly. Runner-up Geboers had gone home in a huff, leaving DT to share the crowd's accolades with Martens, Nicoll and Vimond. Shortly afterwards he emerged from the press office with a huge grin on his face. "Have you heard the news from Payerne?" he shouted to me. "Jem's won the Swiss Grand Prix!"

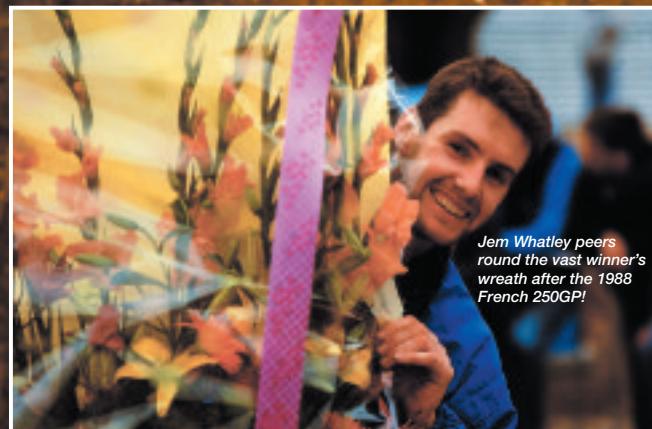
Sure enough David and Jeremy had once more doubled up in their decade of delights, grand prix winners on the same weekend for the fourth time in six years. Now their sons are working together, Ryan Thorpe and Kristian Whatley doing their own 2015 double, winners of both the Pirelli British Masters and Michelin National championships for Dave Thorpe's Buildbase Honda squad!



Last lap, last climb of the 1989 500GP at St Jean d'Angely and Thorpe (3) powers past leader Jacky Vimond to the dismay of the French fans



Cool dude Thorpe immediately after winning both motos of the 1984 British 500GP



Jem Whatley peers round the vast winner's wreath after the 1988 French 250GP!



DIRTBIKE
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SURVIVAL GUIDE TO...

HARD ENDURO!



An essential read for dirty riders who like it **HARD.**

Words and photos by **Future7Media**

Hard enduro. It ain't no walk in the park. Hard by name, hard by nature – it's a tough old game by anyone's reckoning. The majority of us mere mortals can only dream of having the skills and bike riding abilities of the best riders in the world. While we'd scramble and crawl our way to the top of a climb, guys like Graham Jarvis and Jonny Walker scale the very toughest of climbs without even breaking sweat.

Where we'd be face down in a pile of rocks – all broken and bloodied – they tackle sections like Erzberg's Carl's Dinner as if they're out for a Sunday spin.

So how do they do it? And more to the point, what can we learn from them and how can we do things better?

Here are some top tips from the very best in the business on surviving extreme enduro...

Andreas Lettenbichler

BELIEVE... ACHIEVE...

"I believe the difference between a good rider and a great rider is mental strength. It's having the determination to never quit. Ever. I want to finish a race whatever it takes. In extreme enduro anything can happen. You don't know what the other riders are feeling. They could run into problems and gift you an advantage. So never stop. Never quit. Never give in."

"In 2008 at Erzberg my BMW 450 got stuck in first gear after the fourth checkpoint and then I lost a foot peg. But I still managed to finish. I just found a way to carry on. I don't think that's something you can learn though. You can be stubborn but when I ride I feel free – I love it – I don't want to stop and even though I'm now more than 40 years old that feeling of being free drives me on."



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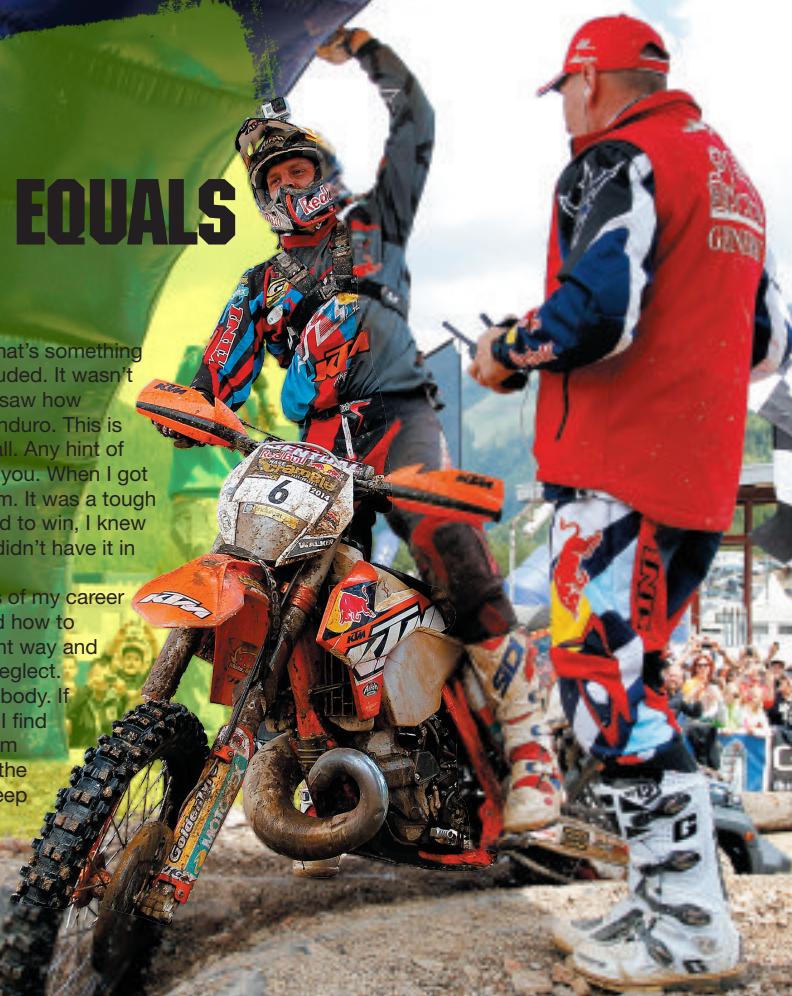
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Jonny Walker

HEALTHY BODY EQUALS HEALTHY MIND

"Your health is your wealth in extreme enduro. That's something often overlooked by a lot of people – myself included. It wasn't until I got sick a couple of years ago that I really saw how important a healthy body is to survive extreme enduro. This is a sport that allows for no weaknesses. None at all. Any hint of a sniffle, headache or fart out of place will crush you. When I got glandular fever, my illness sent me to rock bottom. It was a tough time. It almost had me at breaking point. I wanted to win, I knew I could, but when push literally came to shove I didn't have it in me to get the job done."

"Thankfully now I've got those bleak moments of my career behind me. It taught me a lot about my body and how to manage myself. Eat the right things, train the right way and rest plenty. They're simple things many people neglect. Now when I train I don't over train. I listen to my body. If I'm really tired I'll give myself a break to recover. I find little and often is now the best way for me – so I'm constantly topping up my fitness levels. Then in the build up to a race I rest, ensure I get plenty of sleep and eat the right things as best I can."



Alfredo Gomez

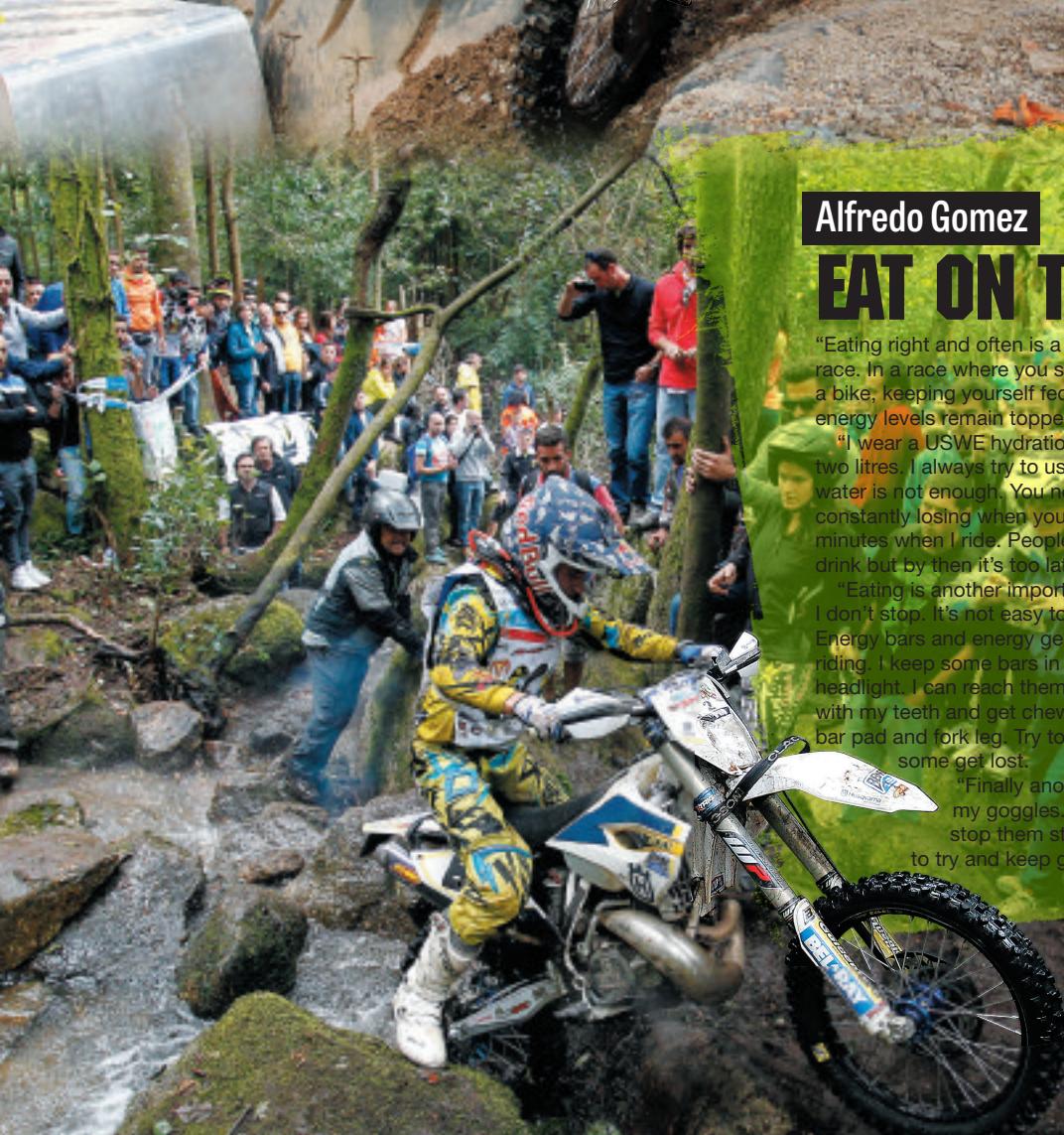
EAT ON THE GO

"Eating right and often is a major part of surviving an extreme enduro race. In a race where you spend upwards of five hours or more on a bike, keeping yourself fed and watered is critical to ensuring your energy levels remain topped up for when you need them most."

"I wear a USWE hydration system on my back and it holds about two litres. I always try to use an energy drink product. Drinking plain water is not enough. You need to replace all the electrolytes you're constantly losing when you ride and sweat. I will drink every 10 or 15 minutes when I ride. People try to wait until they are thirsty to grab a drink but by then it's too late. Little and often is the way."

"Eating is another important thing. I've learned to eat when I ride. I don't stop. It's not easy to do – it's something you need to practice. Energy bars and energy gels are what I mostly tuck into when I'm riding. I keep some bars in my boots and some taped behind the headlight. I can reach them with my hand and tear the wrapper open with my teeth and get chewing. I also tape some energy gels to my bar pad and fork leg. Try to carry a couple more than you need in case some get lost."

"Finally another little trick is to remove the foam from my goggles. It allows more air to get in and helps to stop them steaming up in tough sections. It's important to try and keep goggles on as long as possible."





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Taddy Blazusiak

BE READY FOR ALL OCCASIONS

"Extreme enduro is a relatively new sport so it's constantly evolving.

In the beginning a trials rider on an enduro bike would be unbeatable but now that's not the case. You need a wide range of skills. Of course you must have the technical ability to ride the tough sections but you've also got to have motocross skills when the going gets fast.

"My training depends on the type of race that is coming up. Every race is something a little different. Erzberg is pushing and pulling your bike for two hours and then a race like the Megawatt is a cross-country sprint. I train on my bike as much as possible. I'll ride in the quarry, on the rocks and the hills. I'll even practice getting off to push and drag my bike because that's something you need to be able to do in a race. It's also a good physical work out.

"But regardless of the race I'll also spend a couple of hours each day on the motocross track. Riding too much technical stuff can be bad and racing motocross helps keep you sharp."

Graham Jarvis

SLOW THINGS DOWN!

"Try to slow things down when the going gets tough. You can have all the skill in the world but if you don't have patience you're going to struggle. The most difficult sections are designed to be hard but there is a line through them. Stopping to pick the correct line can make the difference between succeeding and damaging you and your bike during the fall.

"Break the section down. A tough uphill riverbed can be broken down in segments. Tick each one off and you'll succeed. Look for the easiest path even if it's slightly longer. Where you can, keep the wheels moving and avoid dropping the front end into big holes. Practice will improve things and gain you confidence. After a time you'll begin to ride on instinct and will quickly spot the pitfalls of a tough section. Less haste and more speed – that's the trick to getting it right."

TECH TIPS!

Frans Michal's mechanical tips for building a course killing bike...

Mechanic to KTM's Jonny Walker and Taddy Blazusiak, Frans Michal knows how to build a bike that will survive extreme enduro...

"Obviously the riders we work with are the best in the business, but they too can make mistakes when the red mist drops so we try to prepare and protect the bike as best we can. Our bikes don't differ much from the stock production model. The most important thing is to beef it up and protect those vulnerable parts.

"In places like Carl's Dinner at Erzberg or the summit of the Sea to Sky in Turkey it can be very easy to bend a disc or hole a casing on a boulder. A strong sump guard is a must. Let the guard absorb the impacts instead of the frame tubes and engine casings. An aluminium guard over the rear disc and a lightweight but sturdy carbon guard over the front disc helps to prevent bent discs.

"Side casings are delicate so we replace the clutch cover with a Recluse one. They can take a good beating plus hold more oil, which helps to keep the clutch running cooler.

"Nowadays most bikes – two-stroke and four-stroke – come with an aftermarket fan. If you haven't got one they are a good investment. When you are stuck on a climb in a canyon with no ventilation the fan will keep your radiators from boiling long enough to get you out. Other things like hand guards and grab handles are other extreme enduro essentials."

BEST OF THE BEST!

Letti's finest moment

"I have so many memories from racing – it's hard to pick just one. Red Bull Romanians in 2009 was a big year for me. I was riding the BMW 450. It wasn't the favoured bike but I could ride it and I managed to win the race with it. Most recently, last year, my third place finish in Red Bull Sea to Sky was cool. I was fighting with Wade Young for the entire race. And even though he's half my age, I still had enough energy on the final climb pass him for third within 50 metres of the chequered flag."

BEST OF THE BEST!

Grimbo's finest moment

"Hell's Gate last year was one of the best races I've ever ridden. Hell's Gate is the toughest race of the year. It's early in the season so you can get everything from rain to snow and it ends in the dark. It can go very wrong or very right. In 2014 it was perfect. I rode smart and steady in the morning and did what I needed to do to get a good start position for the main race. I think I got into the lead about halfway around lap one and from there kept pulling away. I went on to win it by 22 minutes from Jonny. It was great."





MY FIRST TIME...

Alfredo Gomez' maiden victory

"Winning Extreme XL Lagares in 2014 was my best ever performance in extreme enduro. It marked my first win in the sport and it was an incredible feeling to cross the finish line with the victory. I had such a terrible season until that point. At the beginning of the year I got appendicitis and then badly broke my foot, which resulted in missing Romaniacs. So to come back strong and win on one of the toughest courses of the year was amazing."

FINEST HOUR!

Jonny Walker's favourite Erzberg win

"I have so many memories from racing – it's hard to pick just one. Red Bull Romaniacs in 2009 was a big year for me. I was riding the BMW 450. It wasn't the favoured bike but I could ride it and I managed to win the race with it. Most recently, last year, my third place finish in Red Bull Sea to Sky was cool. I was fighting with Wade Young for the entire race. And even though he's half my age, I still had enough energy on the final climb pass him for third within 50 metres of the chequered flag."

THE NEXT GENERATION

Manuel Lettenbichler is proof that there's a next generation of riders working hard to step-up and challenge the established stars...

Lettenbichler is a surname synonymous with extreme enduro. It's a name that has been on podiums and winning races for pretty much the last decade, thanks to Andreas Lettenbichler. The hardy German – despite now being the wrong side of 40 – is one of the pioneers of the sport with stand out results earned at all of the major races.

But the next generation of Lettenbichlers is now on the scene. Andreas' son Manuel is currently cutting his teeth in extreme enduro and the 17-year-old is very quickly making a name for himself...

"With my Dad racing it was sort of natural to progress into extreme enduro and not the Enduro World Championship. I grew up riding trials and only occasionally played on the enduro bike. It was only last year when I took my first steps into the sport. I think my dad wanted to hold me back until he felt I was ready. Extreme enduro is tough, it's a hard sport to do and with him also racing it meant that I was on my own. I guess he wanted to make sure I could handle myself."

"Erzberg was my first race – it was daunting. Despite having been there many times to watch my Dad race it was a much different feeling sitting on the start line with all those riders. It's probably the hardest thing I've ever done on an enduro bike so to finish it 18th was amazing."

"I'm lucky to have Dad in my corner. We ride and train together. He watches me ride and picks up on what I'm doing wrong and is constantly helping with advice. I'm proud of him and what he's achieved – he's one of the best riders in the world. I know all the horror stories and have an idea of what to expect but like he's always said there is no substitute for experience. Hopefully I can follow in his footsteps and make it onto the podium. Step by step I'm getting there. I've just got to keep pushing and it will come."



TURNING IT AROUND!

After a traumatic few years and an up n' down year Josh Grant is happy to finish 2015 on a high . . .

Words by Max Hind Photos by Max Hind and Steve Cox

The Californian sun beat down as the world's fastest dirt bike racers prepared to wrap up their gruelling 17-round series at the prestigious and perilous Glen Helen raceway. The infamous Southern Californian circuit played host to the final round of the 2015 MXGP season and as the GP regulars readied themselves to do battle one last time they had to prepare to tackle two new foes...

The first of these new adversaries was the Californian heat with temperatures soaring up towards the 100 degree mark. Making things tougher was the fact that the second of these adversaries was very well prepared to tackle the Californian sunshine – we're talking about the native racers of course.

Somewhat unusually for a US GP the local heroes came out in force to show what they are made of on the world stage. Glen Helen is considered a backyard playground for most of these guys which meant that they were well prepared for the heat and well prepared for the

gnarliness that the Glen Helen circuit would serve up.

One of the local heroes ready to take on the world was Josh Grant. Grant is known to match the blazing SoCal heat with his searing speed around the San Bernardino circuit so it shouldn't have been a big surprise to see him log the fastest lap in time practice before running away with the qualifying race and then bringing it to the world champ, Romain Febvre, on Sunday afternoon.

The road to the USGP was a bit of a rocky one for Grant though. After a few minor injuries in the early part of 2015 he finally got back to racing only for his TwoTwo Motorsports team to shut down halfway through the AMA outdoor series. After that, Josh thought that his season was over. And that would have been the case if he wasn't offered a fill-in ride with the factory Kawasaki team.

2015 almost encapsulates JG's entire career – it is clear that Grant has exceptional speed and extraordinary natural talent. However, both



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After a so-so year Grant's ride at the US GP opened the eyes of many industry insiders

injuries and major personal dramas have held the exciting racer back from fulfilling his true potential. The troubles Josh has had with his mother have been well documented and it is truly amazing to see how he has been able to stay so positive and stay focused on what he feels is important in his life.

We visited Josh at his home in Murrieta, California just days after his USGP moto win, as he looked after son number two – Easton – to talk about 2015, his clothing brand HLTN and what the future might hold...

DBR: So Josh, talk us through your 2015 season...

JG: "2015 was definitely interesting. I started off the supercross season with an injury on my foot – well it wasn't even really an injury it was just something that popped up with cists and whatnot in my ankle – so I ended up having to have surgery a week prior to Anaheim. So yeah, the beginning of the year was rough.

"Luckily I had Chad and the good group of guys we had on the team around me and they really helped me to turn my season around about half way through when we got to the east coast. Then I was able to start clicking off a few top fives which was good for me and it actually ended up being one of my most consistent full seasons of supercross on a 450. It felt good to accomplish that.

"Moving forward we started getting ready for outdoors. Everything was feeling good, especially with the team and the bike but I ended up having a practice crash at Lake Elsinore a week before Hangtown which pretty much took me out of the first part of the outdoor series.

"So after missing that I didn't really get a good shot at the Glen Helen National – being injured and whatnot hurt my results there. It was all pretty unfortunate and then Chad made the decision to shut the team down.

"I was kind of just sitting there after that not knowing what my plan was and not knowing where I was going to be moving forward. Chad shut the team down about half way through the national series just as I was coming back from a knee injury and at that point I wasn't going racing. Then I got a call from Kawasaki asking if I wanted to fill in for Wil Hahn because he was hurt and they didn't have another 450 rider. With their contract obligations to their sponsors they needed a guy out on the track so it was kind of a perfect fit for me to jump in there and fill in that spot.

"So with that deal in place I was able to race the last five nationals for Kawasaki. I finished inside the top 10 in every single moto. I felt good doing that as I'd been on the couch for the last two months, well not really on the couch but just not riding and not training and not being ready because I thought that was it. I clicked off some solid top 10 finishes to end the outdoors and moved onto the USGP.

"That was something that I was really looking forward to at the end of the season, that was my goal, to be ready for that race and to get a fair shot at Glen Helen because I really like that place. We ended up having a really good showing at the GP which was great."

DBR: What was it like riding for Chad while it lasted it?

JG: "Riding for Chad was awesome! He's been around the sport for pretty much longer than anyone so he knows a lot about it. It was just cool to be part of a good team, he chose guys from the industry that are the best at what they do and not only that, they were just great people! So that all made for a great environment around the team and it was awesome to be a part of it."

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Josh throws a celebratory heelclicker for his son, Wyatt

DBR: Obviously coming in to the GP on the factory Kawi you didn't know where you stacked up against the Euro riders – what were your expectations?

JG: "Going to the GP I feel I had a slight advantage – you know, just being on home turf and being in our element. So in that sense it was relaxed but at the same time you know their speed is fast, I knew that Febvre was the new world champion and I knew that I would be racing guys that are pretty gnarly. So my whole focus was to not have any hiccups before the race and then to just click off a few solid motos."

DBR: Was that a fully fit Josh Grant out there? **JG:** "No, that was not a fully fit Josh Grant out there. Obviously I was still only coming back at the end of the season – I had a good base but I wasn't top notch or where I should be. But that's how that event played out for me so I just kind of had to do the best that I could with what I had."

DBR: So after your success at the GP has your phone been ringing off the hook?

JG: "Yeah, kind of here and there. But it has mostly been family and friends that were there watching at the race and are just happy to see me out there still plugging away. Even after I've been through some hard stuff in my life they are just happy that they can still see me push and not give up so it was just cool to hear those kind of words from those guys."

DBR: Has racing with the GP regulars changed your opinion of the world championship at all?

JG: "It hasn't really changed my opinion at all. I guess I never really had one because I didn't really know how it worked. After learning the format and how it all works I think it's pretty cool, I think our promoters over here in the US should take some notes on how they run it. It feels very professional and it just feels very cool and I really liked it. Somebody asked me 'if there was an opportunity to go race GPs would I do it?' and I think at this point in my career if there was nothing on the table for me to race here and I had options over in the GPs then yes I would."

DBR: So with that in mind what did you think of RV going over this year?

JG: "Obviously Ryan had his challenges going over and trying to do all those races because everything was new for him. He definitely had his challenges but I think he did really well – he

won a GP so he did good! I can't discredit him for anything that he's not accomplished over there."

DBR: How different was it racing Glen Helen for a GP? Obviously typically at a national each rider has their own set of fans but pretty much everybody at the GP was there to support you and Jessy Nelson. How did that feel?

JG: "It was very cool. Obviously it's pretty much my backyard so the fans are always great out at Glen Helen. I think with how hot it gets, how gnarly the track is and just the environment, the fans they go crazy! They always cheer for me and I think being a bit of an underdog that's something people like to cheer for, which is cool! I mean I'll take it, I love it!"

DBR: We heard a few of the American mechanics and team members remarking about how cool the podium set-up in the Skybox and the two tiered pit lane was...

JG: "Yeah that's what I was saying about how our organisers and promoters need to take some notes on how it was run, like on just how epic it was! It just looks really professional, really close to like the MotoGP style with the pit boxes and everything. I think if it was more like that here in the States we'd be taken a lot more seriously, it would be cool..."

DBR: So what does 2016 and the future hold for Josh Grant?

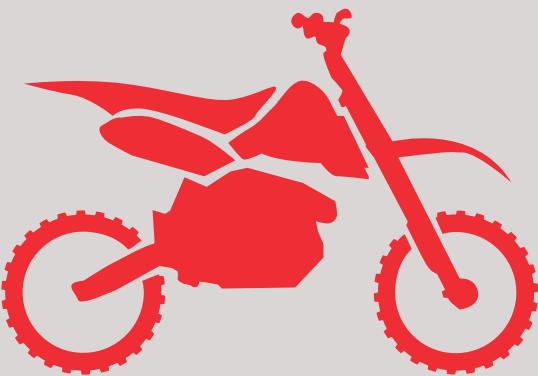
JG: "Right now I don't know what the future holds. Obviously I focused all the way up to the GP and that was my goal. Now I'll just let the cards play themselves. I don't really know what I'm going to do or what's next in line but I hope something pops up where somebody wants me to come out and ride and be part of their team and really sees value in that. If that happens then I'll be racing but as of right now I have no idea!"

DBR: Do you feel that Glen Helen was a big statement on your behalf?

JG: "Yeah I think it was a big statement. Everybody knows that I go fast there but it wasn't just about that. It was about putting it all together over the two days – being the fastest qualifier and winning the qualifying race all of that stuff. Everything just played out really well for me and I put together two solid days and that's what I needed to do. As long as I can keep finding that in my career then I think that should help."



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DBR: How much longer do you think you will be racing professionally?

JG: "Honestly I don't know. Even before Chad shut the team down I didn't know what the future held for me. I was really worried about whether I was done and if I was hanging up my boots although I really didn't want to end on a note like that. I hope I'm like John Dowd riding supercross at like 45 and racing 18-year-olds but I don't know – we'll see..."

DBR: Is that just simply because you love racing?

JG: "Yeah! That's all I've ever done. I think racing dirt bikes and riding motorcycles has always been my gateway out of everything. Obviously I made some mistakes when I was younger by not going to school and stuff but I lucked out by making it pro and being able to make a life out of it."

DBR: So do you have a plan for when your racing career has finished?

JG: "Yes. We started the HLTN collective clothing brand about a year and a half ago as I wanted to set up something to do after racing. My wife and I enjoy making the products and coming up with the designs and figuring out what people like – she's really into that stuff. It's been difficult for me over the past year and a half because I haven't really been able to be part of the day to day deal with Tony and Pete. Those guys have been doing all the heavy lifting and I've just kind of been the face of the brand. It's been a little bit different but it's been cool to be a part of."

DBR: So what is the concept and ideology behind the brand?

JG: "I guess it was about three years ago now I went through a really rough time in my life. I then had this opportunity come up and to do something different and I was at a point in my life when I had to choose whether I was going to dwell on all of the bad stuff that happened or if I was going to fight and move forward and be happy. So when we were coming up with a name I was like 'Happy Living The Now' (HLTN) because that's all I wanted to live for with my kids and my family and that's what meant everything to me.

"To just be happy and to be stoked on life, that's what was important. So that's where we came up with the name. We figured a lot of

people could relate to that in some way and that's how they wanted to live their lives. So I guess it's a bit of a platform to support the people that live like that. It's cool and it's really taking off and I think we've done a good job with where it's at right now. Obviously we aren't a crazy big player like Quiksilver or anything like that – we are just into making cool stuff and having fun."

DBR: But is that where you would like to take HLTN in the next 10 years or so?

JG: "I'd like to but at the same time I don't really know what that takes – I'm not a big business guy that has been in that world or environment a whole lot. But I would like to be, I would like to learn to ins and outs of that side of the business but like I said it's hard for me to do that with the guys while I'm still racing. But I think eventually I will be part of that side of things because that's initially why we started – for me to have something once I finish racing."

DBR: The most memorable Josh Grant race for DBR has to be A1 2009. What has been the most memorable moment for you?

JG: "Yeah I'd have to say Anaheim 1 2009 is one of the most memorable. I've been racing for a long time, I think this is my 11th year and there's been a lot of races that have stood out for me – times when I've had that great feeling. Red Bud 2009 is one and the X Games... There are just so many that stick out it's hard to narrow it down and it's hard to compare the feelings – they are just all good!"

DBR: Who is your all-time motocross hero?

JG: "My all-time motocross hero was Kevin Windham. I just always looked up to him. I was so into K-Dub as a kid going to watch at Anaheim – I loved his style and fluidity on the bike and just what he stood for. I mean, everybody cheers for Kevin because he was just the best – and my favourite."

DBR: It must've been very cool to get to race him and get to know him in the latter part of his career...

JG: "It was awesome to be lining up on the same gate as him. I think it was back in 2006 when I had my first 450 race, just as a fill-in to have some fun and gain experience. He was there and actually ended up winning that night and it was just crazy for me. Then I went to the





McGrath invitational and I was able to race him head-to-head – it was just very cool.”

DBR: In your opinion who is the best motocross/supercross racer of all time?

JG: “It depends on the era doesn’t it? Like McGrath and RC and Villopoto – I think those are the guys. You just have to look at their win lists and their stats and I guess that’s how you can determine it but it’s hard to say because each era is different. I think maybe back then it was a little easier to be up in the mix, there were like five guys who were the kings whereas now I think the whole 450 class could win at a certain time – it’s just crazy.”

DBR: What does Josh Grant like to do in his downtime? When you’re not riding or training or working with HLTN?

JG: “My downtime is not really down at all! I mean being a dad is a full time job too – especially with my two boys. That’s all I do, so when I get back from the track it’s baseball or swimming or whatever we’ve got to do. So just being dad is all I focus on.”

DBR: You have touched on it briefly a few times but you have had a particularly interesting career and life with some incredible highs and devastating lows. I think it would make a fascinating documentary or film...

JG: “We are actually almost done with it. We started a documentary about two years ago with my friend Kyle Cowling. We have a few things to finish up with interviews and stuff but for the most part it’s finished. It documents 2009 onwards – so pretty much my whole 450 career and basically what I went through and my hardships and stuff.

“We lay it all out there so hopefully people will like it and they will be able to take something away from it – especially for the kids that are growing up in the sport. I hope it can set an example of what is really going on and help them not be blinded by some of the other things that the sport does. That is one of the goals of the film but it’s also just to tell my story because not a lot of people really know it. It’s some pretty heavy stuff and it’s pretty dramatic and I just wanted to share that with the kids coming up.”

DBR: So do you just try to put all of that stuff to the back of your mind and try to live in the now?

JG: “Yeah. Obviously all of that stuff is in the past and it’s hard to relive it every time we want to talk about it when we need to go through it with Kyle. But at the same time we are really trying to do something with this and really trying to accomplish something that changes things. I want to be able to change people, open their eyes and really show them what the sport can entail. It’s something that I really wanted Kyle to put together and hopefully we can send it to some film festivals and do some cool things with it.”

DBR: So your oldest lad Wyatt is on a dirt bike now...

JG: “Yeah Wyatt is riding – he’s riding a PW50 right now. He likes it but what’s cool is that he’s not so set on everything being about motorcycles. He loves baseball and he plays that too and there are a lot of other things that he’s into and that’s cool. I’m not trying to force it on him. I don’t expect him to race and I don’t expect him to do any of that unless he wants to



Grant's supercross season got off to a slow start

and if he does then I will support it."

DBR: Does Wyatt like to play MX vs ATV? And so does he play as dad?

JG: "He loves the game! It's kind of funny, we only let him play on school days so on some days if he comes home and if he's got a happy face he can play a couple of motos. It's funny because he can hop on there and change all the gear and the numbers and the parts and everything on the bike and I'm just like 'holy smokes you're only five years old and you already know how to do all this stuff!'. So I came home just the other day after the GP and Wyatt had already changed my number from 33 to 35! I was like 'dude really?'. But it's cool, I like that he enjoys it and that's really what it's all about."

DBR: So other than his dad who is his favourite rider?

JG: "I think it's probably Dungey. He's got a little Dungey toy motorcycle as well as a Kawasaki and he battles and sometimes Dungey takes out dad, other times dad takes out Dungey. But no, I think he likes Ryan –

obviously he's doing good and I think Wyatt just looks up to him and is a fan."

DBR: To finish off, just put it into words what the feeling was like as you took the chequered flag in that second moto at Glen Helen. You looked pretty emotional as the stars and stripes was handed to you – it looked like a special moment...

JG: "That's the feeling that we go out in search of every week – that winning feeling. It's obviously been a while since I've been able to find it and I think the last time was actually at Glen Helen two seasons ago when I won the first moto. That feeling is what we live for and that's why everybody wants to go out and win. So for me after having to wait so long, for whatever reasons, to finally get a win was just a good feeling. Especially because it was against the world champ – I was just pumped on it! When I crossed the finished line and threw my fist in the air I just knew that is why I race motorcycles. That's why you do it, to throw your arm up and just tell everybody that you're pumped!"







NOT SO >>> mini <<< ANYMORE?

DBR EXPERIENCES A FRENCH MOTORCYCLE BRAND NEAR THE COAST OF NORMANDY THAT IS MAKING ITS OWN WAVES IN THE INDUSTRY...

Words by Adam Wheeler Photos by Ray Archer



Our writer Ad Wheeler cracks on with his words midway through his tour of the MCF factory

Twenty four hours after the Motocross of Nations and we're lost in northern France. This misdirection is nothing to do with any alcohol consumption witnessed in the frenzy at Ernée or even the late hours wilting away in the media centre long after Team France had finished partying in the paddock below. Our diversion is due to a curious invitation to visit a French motorcycle manufacturer that is making a sizeable 'rut' in the industry and we're struggling for any signs of a factory setting. Up near the fringes of Normandy we can smell and even hear the waves of the English Channel close-by but so far not a braaap in earshot.

There is something a little ironic about the efforts of Yannick Coquard and Dimitri Bera in their creation of YCF (Yannick Coquard Factory) in 2004 and a site in France close to the beaches that contain so much history of invasion and threat. It is now YCF that have

other manufacturers worried of 'conquest' with sales of 8,000 plus of their minibikes – more than 5,000 in France alone – and some seriously big names in the sport of motocross advocating the efficiency of their Chinese-produced motorcycles such as Cairoli, Bayle, McGrath, Roczen, Tixier.

Eventually, and with the help of press agent and revered French journalist Pascal Haudiquert, we find the modest facility in Commes and are shocked to discover brand new personalised 125cc bikes parked outside reception in our country colours and ready for a blast on the SX/MX track located around the back or a slide around the adjacent supermoto course.

We soon find out that it's this attention to detail that is helping YCF find a niche in the market. The stocky frame of the friendly Coquard leads the group and outlines his vision while giving us a tour of the warehouse, office

and workshop that is a shrine to the creation and manifestation of mini-bike production.

"We wanted to develop a motorcycle where people could begin off-road riding or supermoto," he says. "We see that other starter bikes, like a KTM, are very fast and expensive. We feel that we have a gap for small bikes, low weight and at a low price for those wanting to start riding whether that means kids, adults, men or women."

In the main storage atrium of YCF boxes of bikes are stacked like desirable toys. Memorabilia from YCF's many star-named affiliations line the walls. The 2015 Ken Roczen RCH stickered model sits proudly opposite a large Chinese statue in reception. It is perhaps the storeroom that is the most impressive area. A maze of shelves and trays of every component – bagged, sealed and tagged – that goes into the assembly of YCF's comprehensive 15 bike range and in a wide span of OEM



colours as well – it looks like the world's most engrossing construction kit.

This resource is replenished constantly thanks to weekly container deliveries from their factory in China and not only adds a customisable edge to their bikes (complimented by the excellent sticker kits) but also a fast-acting supply chain for their customers.

"My father had the biggest off-road Suzuki shop in France," explains Coquard. "I took great experience from that and also his association with many riders at Bercy [supercross] and even world championship motocross because he ran his own team at one point. I developed a goal of wanting to make my own company and have spare parts in stock because many brands struggle with this and it is something important for riders who want to be out on the bike and using it."

YCF might want to offer a practical introduction for motorcycling to many but its

clear that the bikes are also pretty fun as well. Watching the Aubin brothers, Nico and Arnaud, and the likes of Livia Lancelot throwing them around outside while we finish our trip around the unit it is clear that these are versatile little machines and certainly enough for a pro rider to entertain him or herself. They look the part. I can recall Tixier motoring around the MXGP paddock with one and they've also starred in the special Bercy opening ceremony processions in the past.

YCF can threaten the likes of KTM's pricing and performance and they are equal to the Austrian's prolificacy with their line-up. Everything from 50cc automatic 'pee-wee' derived bikes to 125, 150, 190 fully geared factory editions and the accompanying supermoto versions means there is something for everybody.

While the breadth of choice is eye-opening there is a degree of scepticism. Some concern

about the Chinese roots and manufacturing. Coquard elaborates on the whys and wherefores of YCF's base of fabrication. "We started this Chinese project in 2004 with my partner Dimitri – part of a French family that had been based over there for 18 years," he says. "After some time we realised that if we wanted to produce strong bikes and not make a copy of other brands we needed to do our own models.

"In 2007 we founded a site and in 2008 I decided to live there for two years with the family to oversee the set-up and we wanted the factory to have a European style – clean and with careful attention to all the details of the bikes.

"In the first two weeks there I was wondering 'have I made the right choice?'. At the beginning the employees came to the factory and saw two French bosses – this was something they had never seen before. It was very hard initially but we went step by step to >>



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Minibike racing with your mates is a ton of fun



Company founder Yannick Coquard chats with Livia Lancelot

set up the production line. We made a track behind the factory to thoroughly test all the bikes, parts and components. For a Chinese worker it was again strange to produce the bikes and then directly see what it did and what it was for."

So why China and not some other part of Asia? Or even another continent? KTM now produce bikes in India and some of the Japanese brands largest plants are in South America or central Asia.

"A big advantage in China is that everything can be easily produced," says Coquard. "The engine, steel, aluminium materials. You can find what you want. You can choose the quality of production. If you want aluminium 70 or 75 or 60 or 61 then you can source it.

"I worked with a designer in France who helped with many parts and plastic kits," he goes on. "We also have six designers in China who make drawings and work with computer technology to make the parts we decide on."

Other marques have been known to leave their junior and entry-level bikes untouched for a number of years with only minimal upgrades and improvements. It is an odd strategy considering that many people's first touch and experience with motorcycling often starts on smaller apparatus. Technical progression and evolution of the minibike is another area in which YCF are able to exploit although Coquard stresses that diligent lead and development time goes into their bikes. "For next year, for example, we have already been working for over two years on some parts to ensure they are reliable and perform well. Sometimes it can take six months: the part is easy to do but you go through that testing phase. For sure it can take a couple of years to get through a complete bike.

"Big brands at the beginning did not know us and thought 'YCF, okay, Chinese product...a joke', he reveals. "Later on sometimes I would get calls because they know that we sell a good quantity of bikes. The main issue is that for the big companies 'off-road' is almost nothing. Our advantage is that we are very specific and if we are creative and active then we can activate ideas in a very short amount of time compared to the big brands."

Back outside and we get to have a go. A lack of appropriate kit means that the motocross track is attempted with just a couple of laps on jeans, trainers and a road lid. The supermoto course a slightly safer bet. The 125 geared bike feels a bit strong and lurchy in first and behaves nicer pulling away in second. The power is on-tap and overall it's a bustling little ride.

The automatic is calmer and easier but still a handful for kids. Fortunately YCF downscale to 90 and 50 engines for even younger first-timers and the adjustable throttle will help. From the models we tried to the supped-up versions in the hands of the pros it is clear that YCF have a workable product on their hands and although the demands from eventual customers will not enter the same bracket as for larger and conventional motorcycles there is still plenty on offer.

Coquard, backed by his family and a small troupe of staff, have hit the French market hard with some decisive marketing ploys and test days that have taken the YCF wheels direct to potential clientele. It is this approach that has reaped dividends so far and has inspired confidence to continue expanding their catalogue and consider wider international distribution. Their Chinese connection is >>







Yannick and his mountain of minibikes ready for shipment

also prevalent through the presence of other accessories and apparel like t-shirts and detailing. They are well equipped to forge a brand identity.

"The marketing is important but we have also been focussed on finding good dealers," he says. "We try to do testing days with the customer. People want to ride a motorcycle, any motorcycle, but they might think a bike has too much power and is not easy. The whole YCF range has an adjustable throttle, starts easily and we push people to try the bikes and make that discovery – that off-road can be fun and not that expensive. Probably after a few years they can move to a big bike."

"The next step, and an important one, is to find good importers in each country. We started pushing in France because for sure it is easier for us. If it can work here then it can work elsewhere. We need to work together with people and expand the range."

YCF know how to lay-on a pleasant day. The welcome, the tour, the chance to ride whatever we want – including our customised bikes – a

BBQ and then trip to the historic beaches nearby. Beneath the hospitality there is single-mindedness about the message they want to convey and that the company is striving to reach fresh boundaries. From what we've seen YCF is bound to become more prevalent – and more easily discoverable – in years to come and Coquard is not sitting still.

"In five years I think we will have a bigger range," he opines. "I think we will have more importers. Many people are talking about electric but there are not that many products on the market because the capacity of the battery is not so good. We have started work on this. It is a different engine concept and the type of customer will be different; those that want something to play with in the garden or those that use bicycles a lot and even powered bicycles. The key is the noise. We have places where we cannot ride with a normal bike and we've worked a lot on our engines to reduce the noise levels. We want people to be able to play and ride in as many places as possible."





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OVER AND OUT!

CELEBRATING THE YOUTH CAREER OF CONRAD MEWS...

At Preston Docks for the penultimate round of the Maxxis MX2 series a ninth-placed finish after a crash in the opening race was a bit of a downer for series leader Oliver Osmaston but, ultimately, the day ended on a high. Grabbing the next two moto wins, the MXW Racing Chichester Honda runner topped the podium and increased his series lead.

Finishing off the ONK series with a 4-2 result at Mill, Conrad Mewse (Red Bull KTM) is the Dutch National 125cc champion!

In 2015 he's also world Junior 125cc vice-champion and fourth in EMX 125s – that's not too shabby a haul as he signs off from youth racing but such is the high standard he's set himself he wanted even more from his final fling in the youth division.

Looking back on his career, it's a tale of glittering success and one without parallel at British youth level.

I first came across Conrad at the tail end of the 2008 season, just as he began to apply the pressure on older, more experienced rivals. Back then it was the '08 season Junior heroes he was bashing about and such was his talent it was easy to predict he would be the next 65cc star. 'A national title for Mr Mewse in 2009?' was the Rage question I posed in October 2008.

In fact, there wasn't just the one title won in '09 as three National 65cc championships duly rolled in – the BYMX, BSMA and Elite Youth Cup – and in 2010, aged 11, he was the Red Bull EYC SW85cc champion. And in 2011 – after winning all but one round – he picked up the BYMX SW85cc title, knocking back Jay Hague and Jordan Eccles.

Moving on to 2012, his early season form on the big-wheel bike was so rapid no UK championship would have been a full test of his talent. So the decision to race in Europe was made and the familiar routine of knocking spots off the establishment moved to Holland.

In the ONK 85s Davy Pootjes and Bas Vassen were the two older hotshots in the Mewse sights and he duffed them up a few times. There was a third place finish in the ONK that year and if it hadn't been for a puncture at the Matterley Euro finals he would have been the 2012 European champion at 13.

In 2013, following a crushing 1-1 display, he was the European champion at Matterley and he also won the ONK 85s together with the biggest prize of all. Picking up the world Junior title after going 2-2 at Jinin in the Czech Republic was the crowning glory of a magnificent year.

Bringing the story back to 2015, Conrad's dice with Maxime Renaux at El Molar for this year's world 125cc Junior crown was widely acclaimed as some of the best racing ever seen at this level.

Stepping into the Maxxis adult ranks in September on what appeared a very standard 250F KTM, his debut at Preston Docks was nothing short of remarkable – eighth overall on the day with a best-placed result of fifth in moto three was astounding.

Taking a closer look at moto three reveals he ran a fastest lap under 2.5 seconds behind winner Max Anstie – that was going some!

So there you go, just a flavour of what Conrad Mewse did in his youth days. Rage salutes you young man!



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IT'S A WRAP!

MX NATIONALS SIGN OFF IN SWANLEY

Wrapping up a memorable series at Canada Heights, the MX Nationals crowned Lewis Hall (SW85cc), Jack Bintcliffe (BW85cc) and Henry Williams (MXY2) as this year's youth champions.

Following a magnificent run of success, Feehily MX pilot Williams secured his crown at the previous round so he ran with the pros at the series finale. Claiming the final two moto wins in MXY2, Michael Ellis took the overall victory in Kent but series runner-up Alexander Brown ran him close.

In the BW85cc class the championship concluded with two moto wins each for Bintcliffe and Ben Clark. Bintcliffe and main title rival Jed Etchells (Monster Kawasaki) finished the weekend tied on points in second and third overall as Clark secured the podium top spot. Clark's overall win meant there was a different winner at each round and his series third suggests there's much more to come from him in 2016.

Making it a grand total of 17 moto wins in the series, Hall swept the board in the SW85cc class. After going close in the BYN and Pirelli Masters series, championship gold in this one was a well-justified reward for the Team Green star's outstanding season's work.

Preston Williams was the Canada Heights runner-up and despite being one round down he finished an impressive series fourth. Louie Kessell capped a wonderful season taking MX Nationals silver as consistent top performer Sam Nunn went away with series bronze

At FatCat Motoparc for the climax of Maxxis MXY2, Jordan Eccles (DRF Husqvarna) cranked it up to win motos one and two. Champion Oli Osmaston took the final race win, settling on third overall for the day. Osmaston (MXW Racing Chichester Honda) finished third in moto

one and won the title with a fifth-placed finish in moto two.

Running a 1-1-2 card, Eccles topped the FatCat podium and ended up with a sixth placed series finish. Going 2-3-3, FatCat runner-up Robbie Dowson (Eurotek KTM) climbed into championship second as Rob Yates (Watson Plant Bridgestone Yamaha) ended his youth days taking series third.

Over in Belgium at the Baisieux circuit Team Britain finished fourth overall at the Coupe de l'Avenir. In the past the competition was adult under 21s but in recent years 85s and now 65s have had a big role to play.

With an impressive individual fifth place overall Charlie Heyman (Middleton MX) was our star 65cc rider and that bodes well for him at next year's Europeans. Backed up by Bradd Lee Timmis and Harvey Cashmore, as a team they also finished fifth overall.

In the 85s a fourth-placed team finish resulted as TM's Callum Gasson along with Team Green's Lewis Hall and Kacey Hird all showed top speed. In a section stacked with some of Europe's finest, Team GB would have been even higher had it not been for few crashes.

Down at Weston for the annual beach race Charlie Palmer won in the 65s, finishing one lap clear of the field. This is his favourite event so it was a fitting way for him to end his Junior racing days. Matt Tolley was runner up with Frank Skillin third.

In the combined 85s Sam Price finally shook off this season's bad luck and was delighted to race to a 37 second BW85cc win over Dan Bewley. Howard Wainwright claimed podium third as early race leader Harry Kimber settled on fourth.

It was rear brake problems that affected

Kimber as Eddie Jay Wade was next over the line. Also suffering rear brake problems, Wade – in his first ever Weston outing – claimed the SW85cc win followed home 10 seconds later by SW85cc runner-up Sam Nunn. Ninth over the line but third in the SW85cc class was Louie Kessell.

In the Youth 125/250 race Oli Benton grabbed the early lead with the chasing pack including Jordan Eccles, Henry Williams, Jake Edey, Jed Etchells and George Grigg Pettit. A small tumble for Benton at around half-distance saw Eccles take over up front and as Benton fought his way back to the front and eventual victory Eccles' hopes of glory died along with his engine two laps from home.

Williams finished runner-up in only his second outing on a 250F and Jed Etchells made podium third.

FINAL SERIES STANDINGS

MX Nationals SW85cc

1 Lewis Hall 559, 2 Louie Kessell 431,
3 Sam Nunn 424, 4 Preston Williams 359,
5 Drew Kemp 358, 6 Dylan Woodhall 320

MX Nationals BW85cc

1 Jack Bintcliffe 470, 2 Jed Etchells 450,
3 Ben Clark 421, 4 Dylan Woodcock 339,
5 Rossi Beard 275, 6 Sam Price 269.

MX Nationals MXY2

1 Henry Williams 443, 2 Alexander Brown 383,
3 Joe Jefferies 369, 4 James Carpenter 356,
5 Josh Coleman 320, 6 Jake Sheridan 310

Maxxis MXY2

1 Oliver Osmaston 289, 2 Robbie Dowson 243,
3 Robert Yates 234, 4 Jay Hague 228,
5 Henry Williams 197, 6 Jordan Eccles 172

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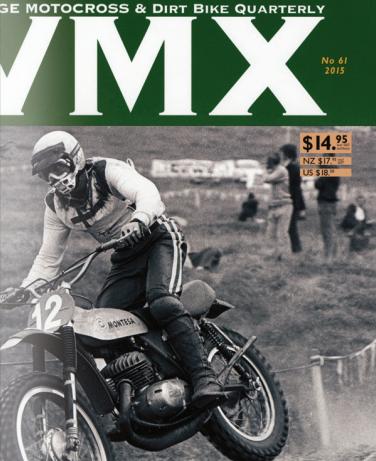
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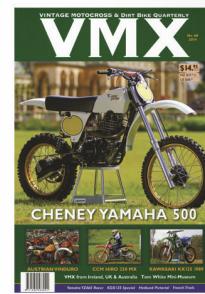


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SPOTLIGHT ON...

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Following a good showing at the March 2009 Wildtracks BSMA national opener I distinctly remember thinking to keep an eye on Jamie Carpenter.

Conrad Mewse and Jake Deacon went bar-to-bar for the overall win in the 65s that weekend but almost as impressive was gritty and fearless Jamie as he whistled his way over the dusty hardpack jumps. To be absolutely fair, Jamie along with the likes of David Keet was right in the mix on both days of action.

At that particular point Jamie could hardly imagine just how much injury grief was about to come his way. Before this year's outstanding run of results – and largely due to injuries – a runner-up finish in the BSMA SW85s in 2010 was his best national championship finish.

In 2013 he was by far the youngest in the GT Cup 125s and he finished in championship fifth. That result would have been so much better though if he hadn't have missed the final three races with yet another injury.

Worse was to follow in 2014 when Jamie found himself in hospital following a horror smash at the Dutch ONK 125cc opener. A badly broken pelvis, a busted collarbone and a punctured lung took some getting over but then along came 2015 and the good times rolled in...

Pirelli Masters MX2 champion, Phoenix Tools South West Junior champion and a top finish in the MX Nationals that could/should have been a runner-up award. So 16-year-old Jamie a bit of an unsung hero in 2015. Rage cornered him for a word...

Rage: Hi Jamie, massive congratulations on this season's achievements. Will it be much the same formula in 2016 staying with Phoenix Tools Husqvarna? And will you be concentrating on the same competitions as in 2015?

JC: "Thanks, 2015 has been a long season for me competing in four championships but a really good one. Yes, I am staying with the Phoenix Tools team although on different machinery as Phoenix Tools are changing manufacturers next year to Honda. In 2016 it looks like I will be doing less championships, mainly concentrating on the Maxxis and MX National MX2 championships. Doing less racing will help me prepare more. I will hopefully be racing at some MX1 races aboard a 450 too."

Rage: How has being a member of the Phoenix Tools squad helped your game?

JC: "Barry Moore, the team owner, is a fairly relaxed guy and he's very supportive. Also having other people in the team there to help and advise me has really helped too."

Rage: Was the end-of-season date clash between the Phoenix Tools championship and MX Nationals a big disappointment?

JC: "Yes! I really wanted to finish a strong second in the MX Nationals but my dad persuaded me that we had to compete in the SW championships as chances of winning titles do not come easy or along that often!"

Rage: What was your favourite competition in 2015 and why? And do you have one particular race result as stand-out result?

JC: "All of the championships I competed in

during 2015 – the Maxxis, Pirelli British Masters, MX Nationals and South West Premier – have been really good and well-run events. The stand-out race result for me was my first national race win of 2015 at the opening round of the MX Nationals at Preston Docks. Going bar-to-bar on the last lap with two of my competitors and managing to bring home the race win and the team's first national race win was really special."

Rage: Have you set yourself any goals for 2016? What will you be doing through the winter months and is there any part of your game you think you need to work on?

JC: "To keep improving! I try not to set specific goals, to keep working hard, get faster and let the results come. Through the winter months I will have a short rest before my pre-season physical training starts. We will also get plenty of riding in and may travel to Belgium, Holland or Spain depending on weather. As we are changing machinery we will have a lot of testing to do. As always, I will work hard on all aspects of my riding, including technique and speed, to become an all-round better rider for 2016."

Rage: Thanks for all that Jamie. You get the last words, who do you need to thank?

JC: "I would like to thank all my sponsors and supporters. Especially my dad who is always in my corner and my mum and sister for their continued support. Barry Moore and the Phoenix Tools team for their support, laughs and jokes, Matt Hutchins at Evotech for providing me with great engines and suspension and Ronald Starink for all his help and advice."

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50 SHADES OF GREY!

We handpick some black and white classics from the Jack Burnicle archives and after a small delay obtaining imagery will finally get around to running those factory bike tests we promised you last month. Speaking of tests we'll also have our 2016 Mega Test that'll pitch pretty much every one of next year's motocross models head-to-head – unless one of more of the manufacturers are too chicken to get involved of course. As well as all that we'll have a heady mix of exclusive interviews and features plus a look back at the year through the lens of Nuno Laranjeira. Exciting stuff...



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